

PZ 3
. B4596

FT MEADE
GenColl





HILLSIDE

A TALE OF NEW
ENGLAND
COUNTRY
LIFE



By HENRY H. BERRY

HILLSIDE

A TALE OF NEW ENGLAND COUNTRY LIFE

BY HENRY H. BERRY

*Give diligence to present thyself approved unto
God, a workman that needeth not to
be ashamed, handling aright the
word of truth.—2 Tim. 2:15.*

THE LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS

LOCKPORT, ILL.
WILL COUNTY PRINTING CO.
1904

ILLUSTRATIONS

TITLE		PAGE	
1.	Hillside (on front cover)		
2.	The Village Church	1st Chapter	7
3.	Snow Bound	2nd “	16
4.	Old School House	3rd “	25
5.	Molly Ockett Mt.	4th “	34
6.	Speckled Mt.	5th “	41
7.	Black Mt.	6th “	46
8.	Grist Mill	7th “	55
9.	Board Saw Mill	8th “	65
10.	Tail Race of Saw Mill	9th “	83

HILLSIDE.

CHAPTER I.

MR. JENKINS EXPLAINS.

“WELL, I call that a pretty good sermon,” said Deacon Harper to his neighbor, Mr. Jenkins, as they went out together from the little church to get their horses.

“Passable, passable,” said Mr. Jenkins, “but it comes a leetle mite tough on a man that has walked as well as he could in the church for twenty years, to be told at this late day, by a young upstart of a minister that he is a ‘robbin’ God.’ But then, that ’ere text was written for them old Jews and everyone knows they’re a tight-fisted set of rascals. Why, only this last week one of them was by our house with a great big pack on his back. I was foolish enough to let him into the house, an’ to stop an’ talk to him a while an’ finally he cajoled me into buyin’ cloth fur a suit of clothes, tellin’ me that he was givin’ me a big bargain. He said it was the best piece of goods I ever saw, an’ he was lettin’ me have it fur about half price. Waal, I bought it, and, as I needed the suit, I carried the cloth over to Redding to have the tailor there cut out a suit, for I thought Mirandy could make it up after it was once cut out. An’ what do you think that ’ere tailor said? Why, he said he could have sold me as good cloth as that was and for less money. Just think of

it! And, if they will cheat men when they get a chance, I bet they'll cheat God. They might not all be like this 'ere Jew, but if they are, it's no wonder to me that the old prophet Malachi had to tell 'em that they had 'robbed God,' for I should think they would have done it right along, fur its just like 'em. But for that young preacher to stand up there 'an tell us that we have robbed God! That's all moonshine; that's all nonsense. Fur ain't I been a faithful worker ever since I jined the church? Don't I give to the church reg'larly and quite cheerful? To be sure I don't give as much as a good many, fur I can't. I ain't able. Don't the bible say he that pervideth not for his own is wuss than an infidel? An' that's awful. I don't want to be an infidel, so I try to take care of my own family and pervide for them, as the Scriptur' says."

"And," continued Mr. Jenkins, "he said we robbed God by not givin' to him the whole of Sunday. I think I've allers done purty good there. I allers go to church on Sunday mornin.' It keeps me busy though from the time I get up till meetin' time, fur I don't get up quite as early as on other mornin's, fur a man must rest after slavin' all the week. And then, on Sunday mornin's, I allers salt my cattle an' card 'em all over, fur I don't have time other mornin's—and it's meetin' time before I know it. Then, after meetin' an' dinner, I read the paper that I couldn't find time to read durin' the week, until I get that sleepy I have to go on to the lounge. And, when I wake up it is about chore time. Then I do my barn chores an' then read another spell, an' then go to bed. I don't usually go to meetin' in the evenin' unless there is somethin' special goin' on, fur I live, as you know, quite a piece from church. And, time I get home an' the horse put away it is late, an' I feel sleepy next mornin' so I can't work so well. So I don't go much, but I think the young Elder hadn't any call to pint that text at me fur I hain't robbed God."

"Well, well, man alive, I did not intend to start you off on a rant like this," said Deacon Harper, quickly, "but you must have been hard hit," he continued more slowly.

"No," said Mr. Jenkins energetically, "it didn't hit me, but I was only tryin' to explain that that text was fur the Jews an' that the Jews needed it."



"Well, I think we all need it," said Mr. Harper dryly. "I think we needed all we got to-day, although it was a little close, and I for one intend to practice the truth, as we heard it to-day, but I must go on or my wife will be around here to see what makes me so long getting my team." Mr. Harper drove off, while Mr. Jenkins and Tommy climbed into their cutter and also started for home.

Tommy Jenkins, a lad of sixteen, had been an interested listener to the conversation that had taken place while they were hitching up their teams, and after they were comfortably seated in their cutter and jogging towards home, he broke out.

"But, father, didn't the minister to-day prove everything that he said right from the Bible?"

"Waal, now, I dunno as he did; he told what the Jews had to do an' ought to do, but I ain't no Jew an' so that don't apply to me."

"But," said Tommy eagerly, "there were a lot of verses out of the New Testament and they all seemed to teach that we ought to give a regular part of what we earn, and I don't believe you keep any account of what you give, and I know you don't give much, only once or twice a year."

"Waal, you are a great one, you are, preachin' to your old father."

"But, it's in the Bible," said Tommy stoutly; "the elder said so this morning."

"Waal, when I see it I'll believe it, an' not before," said Mr. Jenkins with emphasis.

"All right, father," said Tommy, "I'll make you see it pretty soon; but will you do it if it says so?"

"Of course I will! Don't I allers do what the Bible says?"

"You may not be quite so ready to do this," said Tommy quietly.

"Never you fear about that," said Mr. Jenkins earnestly, "you just trot out the verses. That's all you have to do. In the New Testament, mind ye, for the Old Testament was fur the Jews, an' I'm no Jew."

Tommy relapsed into silence, making a firm resolve in his own mind that he would find the Bible verses right away to see if his father would follow their teaching as he had so confidently said he would. He doubted it some for he knew that the preacher that day had said enough and quoted enough Bible verses to show plainly that his father was not living according to the teaching of that sermon. That was the reason why he had been so stirred up about it.

He kept these thoughts to himself and they soon reached home, where an excellent dinner awaited them. During the meal farmer Jenkins had to tell his wife, who was not very strong and had not attended church that morning—and Mr. Jenkins was particular about having dinner as soon as he arrived home—about the sermon and how he had applied it to them. “But I don’t see how it fits me,” said Mr. Jenkins. “It comes a lot closer to Black over on the East Ridge, for he never gives over five dollars to the church, an’ sometimes not that, while I give ten.”

“But, father,” said Mabel, the seventeen-year-old daughter, “Mr. Black does not own his place, he only hires it and, besides that, he has a large family.”

“Waal, what of that? I bet he don’t have a daughter that he has to pay out money for right along for music lessons as I do,” said Mr. Jenkins quickly.

Mabel relapsed into silence at this sudden home thrust, for she knew she was costing her father considerable for music lessons. But her desire had been so strong that she had overcome her father’s opposition. Her rapid progress had shown how earnest was her desire to learn and she considered the money paid for music lessons well spent.

Her father was not altogether of the same opinion, although he was proud of his daughter and her accomplishments. He liked to give her a thrust once in a while to let her know the sacrifice he was making for her education. He took as a matter of course the faithful work that she did every day in the home, and never once thought of paying her anything for it.

The dinner was soon finished and in silence Mr. Jenkins went, as was his custom, into the sitting-room, where he sat down and prepared to enjoy his Sunday afternoon’s rest in a large easy chair. On the table lay a Bible, open at the place where his wife had been reading

it, while scattered around on the table were some other books, also the weekly newspaper. Mr. Jenkins merely glanced at the Bible and, picking up the weekly newspaper, was soon buried in the depths of its varied columns.

After his father had become deeply engrossed in his paper, Tom came into the room, looking for his mother's Bible, for he was determined to hunt up those verses that the minister had spoken of that morning and have them ready to show to his father when he awoke from his Sunday afternoon sleep. He turned the leaves of the Bible slowly and thoughtfully, trying to remember where some of the verses were. He had not paid as strict attention as he would have done if he had thought of getting into a discussion with his father. He could not recall any of the passages, only the text with its solemn question: "Will a man rob God?" He was not very familiar with his Bible and did not know where to look. He began at the beginning of the New Testament and looked quite thoroughly through the gospel of Matthew, but did not find the verses he wanted; then he looked in Luke a little, and in Acts and Romans, finishing up in Revelation; the particular verses that he was in search of seemed to elude his grasp, and after an hour and a half of fruitless search he laid the book down with a sigh, and said to himself: "Well, it is a bigger job than I thought for. I guess I better give it up." Then, as his father from his comfortable lounge gave an audible snore, he said with emphasis: "No, I will not give it up. I will find those verses, then we will see if father will live up to them, or will he take it as easy as he does now. I'll ask Charlie Moncrief if he knows where those verses are. I guess between us we'll find them. Let me see. Tuesday night is singing-school night and I'll go around that way and ask Charlie. He is a Christian and knows a great deal more about the Bible than I do."

"Waal, I guess it is chore time, 'aint it?" asked Mr.

Jenkins, yawning and opening his eyes. "Did you find them 'ere verses you was a talkin' about? I seen you lookin' for them before I went to sleep."

"No," said Tommy quietly, "I didn't find them."

"Wall, I didn't think ye would," said Mr. Jenkins triumphantly, "fur I never found them."

"But I will find them," said Tommy with determination, "and show them to you."

"Waal, waal! Let's go out and do the chores now; it's cold and raw an' looks like more snow. I only hope it won't come, for it's nice sledding now and we must haul that cord-wood over to the village to-morrow."

Mr. Jenkins' prediction of snow soon came true, for before the chores were quite completed the snow flakes began to dance and whirl around the barn, driven by the stiff northeast wind that was blowing.

"The wind is right for a big snow storm," said Mr. Jenkins, coming into the big old kitchen after finishing his chores at the barn.

"Well, our Heavenly Father sends the snow," said Mrs. Jenkins gently, "and so it must be all right."

"Oh, I s'pose so," said Mr. Jenkins moodily, "but we are having lots of snow this winter, an' the roads are good now, so I hope it won't be a big storm." When Mr. Jenkins looked out of doors at the storm just before he retired for the night he made up his mind that there would be no hauling wood in the morning. "Instead," thought he, with a sigh, "we may have to beat roads."

The snow was still falling heavily in the morning and piling high in drifts, but before noon the sun had peeped out and the snow had ceased to fall. The wind shifted into the northwest and began with great vehemence to pile the snow into huge drifts. Fast and furious flew the snow all that afternoon, but by night the wind abated and the sun rose the next morning clear and beautiful over the expanse of dazzling whiteness.

A little while after breakfast the slow-moving beating road team was discovered coming laboriously along the highway, making a track through the ponderous drifts. Mr. Jenkins' oxen and Tommy as driver were soon leading the procession.

At the next farm house another yoke of oxen and a driver were added, and Tommy took his place on the sled, among the laughing, joking boys and men. Shovels were occasionally used in some great drifts but usually the steers and oxen floundered their way through and, tramping it down, made quite a good road by the time the sled with its pole under as a scraper had passed over it.

Half of that cold, clear, sunshiny day was spent by Tommy in beating roads. In the evening he started early for the singing school held at the village a couple of miles away, for he was going around, as he often did, by Mr. Moncrief's and call for his friend Charlie.

CHAPTER II.

"SNOW BOUND."

A brisk walk of fifteen minutes in the sharp winter air brought him to the residence of Mr. Moncrief just as Charlie was finishing the chores at the barn.

"Good evening, Charlie," called out Tommy as soon as he was within hearing.

"Why, good evening, chum, have you started for the singing school?"

"Yes," answered Tommy, "and I thought two would be better than one on such a cold night as this."

"That's right," said Charlie heartily, "I am glad you came this way, for I was thinking I would not go, as I know the road down the hill must be very bad, but I guess we can get through."

"Isn't this a lovely moonlight night?" continued Charlie. "It makes a person feel almost poetical."

"Yes," said Tommy, "the moonlight is all right, but I guess I'm no poet for it doesn't stir me, but I know one thing, this is a cold night."

"Come right in," said Charlie, "I did not intend to keep you standing here a moment." Into the large kitchen with its cheerful warmth went the young men.

The picturesque old fireplace, which had done duty for a great many years and still occupied its place at one side of the room, had been superseded in the work of warming the room by a big, black kitchen range, which gave out more heat with a good deal less fuel, but it required more work with the axe and saw than it did in the days of the big backlog.

Tommy was cordially greeted by all the members of

the Moncrief family, as he came in with Charlie, who only waited to give him a chair and then, lighting a lamp, hastily left the room to get ready to go to the singing school.

Mr. Moncrief's family consisted of himself, his wife and four children. The oldest was Charlie, a fine young man of nineteen years. The next was Viola, a delicate girl of fifteen. Then came two sturdy lads, aged twelve and ten, respectively.

"How do you like the singing-school?" asked Mrs. Moncrief.

"Oh! first rate, first rate," answered Tommy. "Doesn't Charlie enjoy it?"

"He seems to, very much," said Mrs. Moncrief.

"Why don't you go, Viola?" suddenly asked Tommy.

"I suppose there are two or three reasons," answered Viola. "Father and mother think it better for me to wait until next year, as I may be stronger then. Really I could hardly walk there and back, as you do, and you know Charlie's colt is not very well broken yet, so that he only drives him a little. He is young yet and the roads are bad up this hill most of the time during the winter. But why doesn't Mabel go?" continued Viola.

"She does," said Tommy quickly, "but she prefers to go with some other girl's brother than with her own. It's a little more fun, you know. Well, I take some other fellow's sister sometimes myself."

"Didn't we have a great snow storm?" said Alonzo to Tommy in a pause in the conversation.

"I should say we did," answered Tommy with energy. "I didn't get through beating roads to-day until about three o'clock, and I started out a little before nine this morning."

"Well, you did have a hard pull of it," said Mrs. Moncrief. "Charlie was gone most of the day, also, beating roads."

"This snow storm and the beating of the roads to-day reminded me so much of Whittier's descriptions in *Snow Bound* that I had to get the book and read it again," said Viola.

"Who is Whittier?" asked Tommy, "and what does he tell about beating roads?"

"Why, he was a Massachusetts poet," said Viola, "and being a farmer's boy, knew about snow and beating roads. Didn't you ever read the poem?" continued Viola.

"No," said Tommy, "I ain't much on poetry; I dunno as I ever read a poem in my life, but read us a little about that, will you please?"

So Viola, nothing loth, procured the book, and opening it at "*Snow Bound*," began:

"The sun that brief December day
Rose cheerless over hills of gray,
And darkly circled gave at noon
A sadder light than waning moon.
Slow tracing down the thickening sky,
Its mute and ominous prophecy,
A portent seeming less than threat
It sank from sight before it set.
A chill no coat, however stout,
Of home-spun stuff could quite shut out,
A hard dull bitterness of cold,
That checked 'mid vein the circling race
Of life-blood in the sharpened face,
The coming of the snow-storm told.
The wind blew east, we heard the roar
Of ocean on his wintry shore,
And felt the strong pulse throbbing there
Beat with slow rhythm our inland air."

"Say, but that is great," interrupted Tommy.

"Here is a little more about the snow that I want to read," said Viola.

“Unwarmed by any sunset light,
The gray day darkened into night,
A night made hoary with the swarm
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,
As zigzag, wavering to and fro,
Crossed and recrossed the winged snow.
And ere the early bed-time came,
The white drift piled the window-frame,
And through the glass the clothesline posts
Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts.
So all night long the storm roared on,
The morning broke without a sun.”



SNOW BOUND.

“That is a good description of Sunday night,” said Viola, pausing in her reading.

“Yes,” said Tommy, “first rate, but where does the beating roads come in?”

"Just a little further on," said Viola, "here it is."

"Next morning we awakened with the shout
Of merry voices high and clear,
And saw the teamsters drawing near
To break the drifted highways out.
Down the long hillside treading slow,
We saw the half-buried oxen go,
Shaking the snow from heads up-toss'd,
Their straining nostrils white with frost,
Before our door the straggling train
Drew up an added team to gain."

"Well, that does sound as though it had been written to-day," said Tommy enthusiastically, "for that is the way we did, only we got up earlier than those folks, or else our beating-road team was later getting around."

"It's a good description," said Viola, "but there is more of it."

"I'd like to read the whole of it some time," said Tommy.

"All right," said Viola, "if you haven't Whittier's poems you may take my book at any time."

Charlie came into the room at this moment and he and Tommy were soon out in the frosty air, making their way as fast as the loose snow would permit, toward the village. The lights from the village houses shone out away below the boys as they glanced across the valley. The moon hanging low in the heavens flooded everything with its silvery light and made the landscape look glorious. The place where the singing school was held was in a small New England village that ran straggling up the side of a hill, and was appropriately named "Hillside."

There were no railroad trains, the daily excitement being when the stage from the station seven miles away deposited the precious mail-bags at the post-office and brought any travelers who might wish to visit this quaint old town. Or it might be a son or a daughter returned

for a short visit to their childhood's home, bringing joy again to the inmates of the old farm house.

Hillside did not grow much; a new house was built about every second or third year. There were, at this time, two stores, one near each end of the straggling village. One store had been owned and occupied by one man for many years. The postoffice was located here. The other store had changed hands frequently and had been closed a part of the time. There were two cobblers' shops, two blacksmiths' shops, two churches, a paint shop, the village hall, and about twenty-five dwelling houses. There were also three small mills, a board mill, shingle mill and grist mill. The motive power for these mills was water which came from a small lake nestling among the hills about a mile from Hillside. The farmers would haul logs during the winter to the mills, and then when the melting snow made an abundance of power, the logs were sawed into boards or shingles. Corn could be ground at any time at the grist mill.

Directly north and away beyond Hillside was Black Mountain, so-called because in the days of the first settlers a fire had run all over it, and burnt off the trees, shrubs and bush. The surface had been left all black and the name had clung to it ever since. There was a plenty of small trees and bushes on the mountain now, and hundreds of bushels of blue-berries were carried off by the people yearly. A great deal of the top of the mountain was rock, and so the snow would lie smooth and shining over that portion of the top. The front of the mountain lay partly in the shadow and partly in the bright moonlight and the effect was beautiful. Back of this mountain the northern lights were beginning to flash and dance and leap with ever-changing colors, making a scene surpassingly beautiful and inspiring.

East of Black Mountain is a small mountain with a very steep face on its west side. The name attached to it

is "Tumble-Down-Dick." West of Black Mountain is a very bold, rocky, steep mountain known as "Speckled Mountain," the south side of which is almost inaccessible. Still farther west was "Molly Ockett Mountain," named, so tradition says, after an Indian squaw who died there. Away in the distance to the west Mount Washington reared his snowy head so high that he was plainly visible from the hill where Mr. Moncrief lived.

So, to the east, north and west, on this evening as the boys were hastening on down the hill, was spread out before them a picture of marvelous beauty. The bright moonlight flooding the landscape with its wonderful light, the snow glistening and sparkling on the hills and mountains, while dense shadows lay between, and the movement and color of the northern lights gave to some of the scenery a weird and strange appearance. The boys walked on in silence for some distance, seemingly engrossed in the contemplation of the beautiful scenes around them.

Suddenly Charlie broke the silence by exclaiming, "I wonder if the New Jerusalem the Bible tells about is more glorious than this beautiful scene."

"I don't know," answered Tommy; "I never read anything about it in the Bible. Where is it found?"

"Didn't you ever read about it? I think you have missed a great deal. The description is found in the last book of the Bible. I advise you to read about it as soon as you get home, for it is wonderful."

"Do you know your Bible pretty well?" said Tommy, rather hesitatingly.

"Not as well as I wish I did," said Charlie, "and not as well as I ought to, I presume, but I have read it all through once and most through again, and parts of it I have studied considerable. Why, is there anything you wanted?"

"Yes, there is," said Tommy slowly. "You was at

church last Sunday and heard Mr. Powell's sermon on giving."

"Yes," said Charlie, "I heard it. It was very good, but what of it?"

"Well, it powerfully stirred father up."

"Why, what about?"

"Well, you remember that Mr. Powell brought it right down to us that we were robbing God. Father says that meant the Jews and not us. I told him that Mr. Powell read a lot of verses from the New Testament about giving and when father asked me to show them to him I tried to find them, but I couldn't. I thought I would ask you, and between us we perhaps can find enough to make father give more than he does. He has promised, if it's in the New Testament, that he'll live up to it, and I want to see him do it. To say the least, father is rather near, as they talk about."

"Well," answered Charlie, "I think you better come up to our house some evening and we can find the verses."

"All right, thank you; when shall I come?"

"Well, let me see," said Charlie reflectively; "to-morrow night I have promised to go skating, as there is a large place on the lake that the wind has swept clean of snow. I saw it from our house to-day and it will be fine skating; then Thursday night is our prayer-meeting, and I want to be there. Could you come up on Friday night?"

"Yes, I think so," said Tommy heartily.

"All right, then, I will expect you; and come early—but here we are at the singing school," said Charlie. "How cheerful it looks on this cold night, but I do not believe many will be here. The roads are so bad, but the teacher is there, so we shall have our singing-school anyway."

CHAPTER III.

THE VILLAGE GOSSIP.

IN the little village of Hillside there lived a spinster dressmaker, commonly known as the "Village Gossip." As she went from house to house in her work, hearing and seeing a great deal of interest, she felt it her duty to repeat it and, as is usually the case, stories never lost anything by being repeated. Some people were mean enough to say that the dressmaker could not find a man who would have her, for "a tart temper never mellows with age; a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener by constant use."

On the Monday morning following the minister's sermon, Miss Caroline Peters—for this was the newsy dressmaker's name—being at home and having finished her washing, thought it would be restful to run in next door and see Mrs. Jones for a few minutes.

Mrs. Jones was busy with her washing, but was glad to stop and rest and talk awhile. Miss Peters usually attended the little church in Hillside and had been present the day before. After a few moments spent in conversation of a general nature, she said:

"I tell you, you missed it yesterday by not being at church. You ought to have heard the parson. He gave it to the church members in pretty plain language."

"Why, what did he say?" said Mrs. Jones in surprise. "Mr. Jones was there, but he did not say a word about the sermon. I was not well yesterday or I should have gone, as we usually all go; but what did the Elder say?"

"Oh, I can't tell you much of what he said, only a trifle, but his text was in Malachi. I think in the third

chapter somewhere; but it was about robbing God."

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Jones, "I believe I can find it." So she took a Bible from a shelf. Turning the leaves rapidly, she said: "Here it is, the eighth verse of the third chapter, 'Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me, but ye say, wherein have we robbed thee, in tithes and offerings?'"

"Yes," said Miss Peters, "that's the very verse that the minister had for his text. It did me lots of good to hear him preach. I felt as though some of those stingy Christians must be squirming in their seats. There is that Mr. Jenkins, I do believe he is the closest, stingiest man I ever saw. Every time I think or speak of him I am reminded of the story I read some time ago of a wealthy farmer and land owner in England who was so niggardly and mean that his place was known for a long distance around as 'Pinch-me-near.' I am not sure but what it would be a good plan to tack such a name onto Mr. Jenkins' place. Do you know, he only gives ten dollars a year for the support of the church and I give as much as that myself. He is a church member and a professing Christian, and he often tells folks he lives up to the teachings of the Bible. He won't be able to say that again if he thinks of what Mr. Powell said yesterday. He is also real mean in his family, as I know, because I have sewed there some. His wife has to go to him for every cent she needs for groceries or things for herself, and he even keeps the butter and egg money. He could well afford to give his wife that money so she could buy a calico dress once in a while, without telling him just what she wants and just how many yards it will take. He has a large farm, free of debt, and a large stock of cattle and all the tools necessary for farming, and money in the bank besides. I am afraid he is an idolator. The Bible speaks of covetousness which is idolatry. If you call that religion, I am thankful I haven't any."

"And," continued Miss Peters, before Mrs. Jones could say a word, "there's Tommy Jenkins, such a reckless fellow, I should think the girls would be afraid to go out with him, especially now that he drives that young, frisky team. His father doesn't seem to have any control of him whatever. The boy does just what he likes, goes when and where he pleases, and comes home any time that it suits him. He isn't very respectful to his father, either, for he calls him 'the old man,' and sometimes sneers at his father's religion. I don't know as I much blame him for that, though, for I think his father's religion is pretty near a minus quantity. Tommy dances a great deal and plays cards considerable. He is fast going to the bad, it looks to me. But I couldn't help noticing rich Mrs. Farr during the sermon yesterday. She was scowling as though she did not like what was being said. I never knew her to go to much of anything, if she thought she would have to pay anything. She refused to join the Missionary Society they have up there to the church, and she will not attend one of their meetings for fear they might ask her to pay something. I have been told that if they are to take up a collection in the church on a certain Sunday, for some special object, she will not be there. I tell you what, I was glad to see some of those stingy old church members there. I couldn't help chuckling to myself during the sermon. I don't believe some of them will be so fond of telling other folks how very religious they themselves are, unless they begin to practice a little better some of the things they have just heard."

"Did you not take any part of the sermon for yourself?" asked Mrs. Jones.

"Why, no," answered Miss Peters, quickly, "I do not profess to be religious, but if I did I think I would live nearer to what I professed than some do."

"You better show us how to live," said Mrs. Jones quietly.

"I wish Elder Powell would preach a sermon about keeping the body pure and also about wasting time," said Miss Peters.

"Why," said Mrs. Jones, "who do you want to hit now?"

"Oh, most of the men," said Miss Peters energetically, "for they sit around in the store evenings and gossip and smoke until sometimes it is fairly blue with tobacco smoke. I dread to go in there. It smells so. I never go in, in the evening, if I can help it. What a waste of time and intellect, for they might be doing something better and they waste money, too. I saw three or four church members there the other night when I stopped in for my mail. There are two or three town loafers that don't seem to have much of anything to do but sit in the store and play checkers. I don't despise checkers as I do cards because they don't usually lead to so much gambling. A game once in a while is a fine recreation. But what a low aim in life, just to spend their time on a game day after day. I hope Mr. Powell will touch that up, as most of them attend his church. But, my, I must be going," Miss Peters added, jumping up.

Mrs. Jones turned to her washing again after Miss Peters' hasty departure, and worked rapidly to make up for lost time in order that she might get dinner ready for Mr. Jones, who was the village miller, and the children, at noon. There were four children in the Jones family. The two eldest were girls, Irene and Florence, aged respectively twelve and ten. The boys, Walter and Herbert, were eight and six years of age.

Soon after noon the children came bounding in, an extra noisy group this day, for they were full of complaints about school, and all wanted to be first in telling their troubles to their mother. When Mrs. Jones was

able to quiet them, she learned that the school room had not been warm enough, and the children had suffered quite a little with the cold. Like the good mother she was, Mrs. Jones sympathized with her children and then told them of her first school days in a frame school house in the woods, three miles from her home. She used to go every day, even when snows were deep, and sit and shiver in the unplastered room or huddle around the roaring stove.



THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE.

“That was even better than my first school days,” said their father. “I went to school in an unplastered log school house with a big fireplace in one side. We would be warm on one side of us and almost freezing on the other. I well remember what a sensation it made when it was noised around that the school house had

been plastered and they had put in a stove, and how warm it was there the cold days that winter. The seats and desks were made of two-inch oak plank. The teacher's desk was a curious object, in one corner of the room. It was high, wide and lofty, and was a number of steps above the floor."

"We had the same kind of a desk in our school house," said Mrs. Jones, "and after I had been going a few years they plastered the inside of the school house and got a big new stove, which made the room very comfortable; also, they tore away the teacher's desk and got a table and chair instead. The old school house still stands. I see it occasionally, but I always feel sad as I pass it, for there are no merry shouts of happy boys and girls around it now. It has been used as an old tool house for many years.

Mrs. Jones kept Herbert at home in the afternoon, but she thought the older ones could endure the cold, so they went.

The children of the village had fine times coasting down the hill on which the school house was perched. Nearly every noon and night the most of the scholars came down on their sleds, and even the school master used to take a turn at guiding the long "double-runner" in its quick descent of the hill.

CHAPTER IV.

AN EVENING VISIT.

FRIDAY evening Tommy Jenkins hurried through his after-supper chores at the barn, and went to Mr. Moncrief's home, where he received a hearty welcome.

"Did you say, Tommy, that Elder Powell's sermon stirred your father up?" asked Charlie.

"Yes, it did very much," answered Tommy, "and he has promised to live up to the Bible commands, if I can find them in the New Testament. He says the passages in the Old Testament, and especially the text last Sunday, was for the Jews entirely, and was not for us at all. So I came up here to-night to study up the verses for father's benefit."

"Don't you want to study them for your own sake?" asked Charlie.

"I don't know as I care about them for myself," answered Tommy, "but father professes to believe all the Bible, and I want to help him practice what he believes. I don't make any profession, so why do I need them? Where was the text?"

"Don't you remember?" answered Charlie. "It was in Malachi 3:8."

"I didn't bring any Bible," said Tommy. "I don't have one of my own and mother's is most too big to carry, and then I knew you had quite a number."

"You can use my Bible," said Eddie Moncrief, the youngest boy, "I don't need to study it now; I can listen."

"Well, shall we begin?" asked Tommy, almost impatiently. "Where 'bouts is Malachi, anyway? I can't find

it," said Tommy, after turning the leaves of Eddie's Bible a few moments in silence.

"It is the last book of the Old Testament," answered Charlie.

"I never have studied the Bible much," said Tommy, "as I usually would rather study the girls and how we can enjoy ourselves at the dance. Charlie, didn't you ever go to a dance?"

"Yes, several years ago," said Charlie, "but I have not been lately, for I have something so much better now that I have no room nor desire to dance."

"Something better to think about than dancing! What is it? I would like to know," said Tommy, curiously.

"It is 'Christ in me the hope of glory,' and He is so much better than any mere amusements that I have no desire for them."

"But you go skating!" said Tommy, in surprise.

"Oh, yes," said Charlie, "I go skating often, for that is good exercise. Also, I can have the Lord Jesus Christ with me when I am skating. I don't feel as though I could ask him to go with me to a dance. You were at a dance on Wednesday night while I was out skating; but my opinion is, I had the most real, solid enjoyment, for I had the chance to help two or three learn to skate. Their great pleasure was enjoyment enough for me, besides feeling that the Lord and Master was pleased," said Charlie, earnestly.

"Does your father like to have you go to dances?" asked Mrs. Moncrief.

"I don't s'pose he does very well," answered Tommy, "but he speaks more about it hurting the horses than he does of it hurting me. What does it mean to be converted, as you call it?" suddenly asked Tommy, looking at Charlie.

"Don't you know?" asked Charlie.

"Well, no, I don't believe I do," declared Tommy. "I wish you'd tell me what it means to you. I've heard the word used very often and I've seen people get converted at church sometimes, as they tell about. Father was converted once, and you have been, I s'pose. Father's conversion and yours must have been of a different kind, that's why I want to know what conversion is, as you understand it, for I will own I think you have the best kind of religion."

After a brief silence Mrs. Moncrief said: "What does convert mean, Tommy?"

"Why, I s'pose it means to turn around and go the other way," said Tommy, "but I don't see as it makes any difference in anyone after they profess conversion. I don't see but what I stand just as good a chance to get to Heaven as my father does. I expect to go to church more by and by and stop going to dances so much. I am only sowing my wild oats now."

"Tommy! Tommy!" broke in Mr. Moncrief with an earnestness that startled Tommy. "Don't say that. Don't ever say that again. Doesn't the Bible say: 'Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap,' and you have lived on a farm too long not to know that if you sow oats you expect to and must reap oats. If you sow barley you reap barley. There are no two ways about it, and if you sow wild oats, as you say so carelessly, you will certainly reap wild oats. Another thing, you never expect to reap the same quantity that you sow of oats or barley. If you sow wild oats now you will reap a big crop, a crop of sorrow, misery, and eventually death. 'The wages of sin is death,' Paul, the inspired apostle, tells us."

"Now," continued Mr. Moncrief, "you asked what conversion is and what difference there was between a converted and an unconverted man. Did you ever read that wonderful little book by Henry Drummond, entitled

‘The Natural Law in the Spiritual World?’

“No,” said Tommy, “I never did. I never cared for such things. I have only recently begun to think about such things as I have noticed the difference between Charlie and myself. Charlie acts as though he was happy all the time, while I am not, and yet I go more than he does and I seem to have my own way more.”

“Do you think that happiness consists in having your own way?” asked Charlie.

“I used to think so, but I am beginning to think it doesn’t always bring it,” answered Tommy.

“No, it doesn’t,” answered Charlie, emphatically. “Happiness consists in letting Christ have his way in you and in doing as he says. But I think father was going to tell us what conversion is and why we need it, so we will listen to him.”

“Well,” began Mr. Moncrief, “conversion is a turning around from going away from God and against His wishes, to going toward God and doing as He wishes us. There is something more. Christ touches our dead souls and we have life, eternal life, within us. ‘If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, or new creation.’ He has something within him that he did not have before. He has life now, spiritual life, the life from Christ and of Christ. He has Christ within him, the hope of glory.”

“Well, I go to church as much as father does, and sometimes more,” said Tommy, “so I expect to be all right. I am not a great sinner. I never did anything worse than dance all night and tell father a lie once in a while. But I shall get over these little things and grow to be like Christ, if you say that is necessary to enter Heaven.”

“No,” said Mr. Moncrief, “I didn’t say that was the first thing. Growth is a necessary thing, but first there must be birth. ‘Ye must be born again,’ the Bible plainly tells us.”

"I don't see the use of that; neither do I see how it can be," said Tommy, with a puzzled air.

"I will quote Henry Drummond in explaining it to you," said Mr. Moncrief, "because he makes it very plain in his chapter on 'Biogenesis.' 'It must long ago have appeared how decisive is the answer of science to the practical question with which we set out as to the possibility of a spontaneous development of spiritual life in the individual soul. Regeneration has not merely been an outstanding difficulty but an overwhelming obscurity, even to earnest minds. The difficulty of grasping the truth at all has always proved extreme. Philosophically, one scarcely sees either the necessity or the possibility of being born again. Why a virtuous man should not simply grow better and better until in his own right he enter the kingdom of God, is what thousands honestly and seriously fail to understand. Now, philosophy cannot help us here, her arguments are, if anything, against us. But science answers to the appeal at once. If it be simply pointed out that this is the same absurdity as to ask why a stone should not grow more and more living, till it enters the organic world, the point is clear in an instant.'"

"Now, Tommy," continued Mr. Moncrief, "do you see the point? There is no life in a stone and never will be. So, it cannot grow better and better, because there is nothing there to grow. There is no such thing as spontaneous generation, or life from nothing. If there were there could be life from a stone, but life can only come from life. Now we are like a stone, in that we naturally have no spiritual life, and so you cannot develop anything that you have not. There must first be a birth before there can be any growth. 'He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son hath not life.' The Bible says that and it says truly and scientifically. Life cannot come of itself. Life only comes of life, and as Christ is the spiritual life, unless he touches us and brings life to

us we remain forever dead to spiritual things. It is ours to look up and ask Christ to touch us with his life and it is His to give us the new birth. 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out,' our Saviour said. But there," said Mr. Moncrief, "I guess you came up here for another purpose than to hear me talk."

"Well, yes," said Tommy, "I came up here to study the Bible with Charlie. I asked you these questions, Mr. Moncrief, and you were only answering me. I thank you. If it is true," continued Tommy, "that we have no more spiritual life than a stone has, then, of course, we need to have some life given to us before we can grow. For if there is no life, of course there can be no growth, but is it a fact?"

"It is," said Mr. Moncrief, earnestly.

"Well, I have learned something, sure enough," said Tommy, after a pause, "and that something is for myself. Well, I shall have to think about that, but I came up here to learn something for father's benefit. I guess we had better get at it before the evening is entirely gone. Where shall we begin, Charlie? Where is the first verse?"

"I don't know as I can tell you right away," answered Charlie. "I shall have to hunt for a while, I think, or else ask mother. She is a regular concordance. I think she knows every verse in the Bible."

"Oh, no, my son," answered Mrs. Moncrief, quickly, "I only know a very small part of the Bible verses, but perhaps I know more of them than you do. I have studied and lived on them longer. When you are as old as I am, you will probably know a great deal more of the Bible than I do."

"Well, Mrs. Moncrief," said Tommy, eagerly, "where does it tell us in the New Testament that we ought to give a tenth to the Lord?"

"I think there is no definite command to that effect in the New Testament," answered Mrs. Moncrief quietly.

"What!" said Tommy, in open-eyed amazement. "Don't it tell in the New Testament that we must give a tenth of our income to the Lord? Why, I thought Elder Powell last Sunday had a lot of verses that were in the New Testament."

"I guess he did," said Charlie, "but there is no direct, positive, definite command in the New Testament that we must give just a tenth of our income, no more and no less."

"What can I find, then, to prove that father ought to give a tenth?" asked Tommy. "I might as well give it up and go home."

"Wait a few minutes," said Charlie. "While there is no positive command in the New Testament, yet there is a great deal of teaching on that subject in the New Testament, although there is a positive command in the Old Testament. To understand the New Testament thoroughly we shall have to study the subject first from the Old Testament standpoint."

"Father doesn't want to hear anything about it from the Old Testament," said Tommy quickly. "He says that was for the Jews, and he ain't no Jew."

"That's true," said Charlie, "but you must study the Jews' side first, in order to understand our side."

"Well, all right, fire ahead," said Tommy, "and give me a few ideas, for I must go home very soon, and I want something to tell father, for he will ask me about it. He knows what I have come here to-night for."

"Well," said Charlie, "we find that Cain and Abel offered sacrifice unto the Lord. Thus we suppose that the Lord had told them to offer sacrifices. But we are not told any definite amount that people gave until Abraham gave a tenth of his substance unto Melchizedek. Then we find Jacob's vow in the last verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of Genesis: 'Of all that thou shall give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.' Then in Leviticus

we find that God claims a portion of the people's substance. In Leviticus 27:30 we read: 'And all the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's. It is holy unto the Lord.' This applies to rich and poor alike, for we are told in Deuteronomy 16:16, 'None shall appear before the Lord empty.' The same command is also given twice in Exodus. Now," continued Charlie, "If God claims a portion, as he does, if anyone should withhold that portion, wouldn't they be robbing God?"



MOLLY OCKETT MOUNTAIN.

"I suppose so," said Tommy, slowly.

"Well," continued Charlie, "we are told in Malachi 3:8 that they had robbed God in tithes and offerings. But notice, this money and goods that were offered were used by the priests for their support. But God does not say: 'Ye have robbed the priests,' but he says: 'Ye have robbed me, Jehovah.'"

"Well, I must be going home," said Tommy, suddenly jumping up.

"Wait a minute. said Charlie, quickly. "Let me give you a few questions to ask your father. The Jews lived under law, did they not?"

"Yes, I should say so," said Tommy, quickly.

"Are we under law or gospel?" asked Charlie.

"Gospel, I s'pose," quickly answered Tommy.

"Yes, you are right," said Charlie. "Well, was there more of God's truth and the way of salvation made known to men then or now?"

"Why, now, I should suppose," said Tommy.

"Well, just one more question," said Charlie, "and then I will let you go. Hadn't a Christian living now with the knowledge of Christ and all His teachings ought to do as well, if not better, than an old Jew?"

"I should suppose he ought to do more," said Tommy energetically, "and I will see what father thinks about it, too."

"Come up again in a few days, Tommy," said Charlie, and I will show you that there are a great many verses in the New Testament bearing on the subject."

"All right," said Tommy, "I'll be up again soon. I feel as though my head had swelled since I came up here, with the amount that I have learned. The greater part of it isn't for father, either, but I must take it for myself."

"But, say, Charlie, are you going with us on that sleighing-party to-morrow night? We expect to have a fine time, you know, with a supper at the Rumford House. You know the sleighing is fine and the moon will be full to-morrow night, so it will be beautiful."

"No, I think I shall not go," said Charlie, quietly. "I suppose you will go."

"Oh, yes," said Tommy, laughing; "I am one of the originators of the plan."

"But why don't you go, old man, we are going to have no end of fun."

"After we have had our next Bible study," said Charlie, quietly, "if you do not understand then why I don't think best to go, I will tell you."

"All right, then, I will wait," said Tommy, as he stepped toward the door. "Good night, all."

"Good night," came from the Moncrief family, as Tommy went out into the clear, cold, moonlight night.

"What a boy he is," said Mrs. Moncrief, after the door had closed on the form of Tommy.

"Yes," said Mr. Moncrief, "but he may get a great deal of good from these evenings of study. While he didn't get much that he came after to-night, yet I think he got a great deal that he will never forget."

CHAPTER V.

THE SLEIGH RIDE.

“WAAL, now, I s’pose you are chuck full of Bible verses,” said Mr. Jenkins the next morning, as he and Tommy were at the barn doing their chores. An’ I s’pose you are only waitin’ for a good chance to fire them at me.”

“No,” said Tommy, “I don’t believe I have a single Bible verse to hurl at you this morning.”

“What!” said Mr. Jenkins, stopping short in his work with surprise depicted on his face. “Why, I thought you went up there last night to get a lot of Bible verses to convince your old father that he wasn’t following the Bible. You didn’t get any? Waal, I thought you wouldn’t find any. I never found them.”

“Did you ever look, father?” asked Tommy quietly.

“Waal, I dunno as I ever did much lookin’ for those kind of verses. I was satisfied with my way of doing things.”

“But,” said Tommy, earnestly, “is your way the Bible way? That is the question.”

“I s’pose so,” said Mr. Jenkins, “but I don’t know.”

“Well,” said Tommy, “let me ask you a few questions.”

“Who were the first persons that offered sacrifices to God that we know of?”

“Why, Cain and Abel, I guess,” said his father with the air of one that would say: “You are getting back into the Old Testament and I am not interested there.”

“Well,” said Tommy briskly, disregarding his father’s repellant air, “don’t you suppose that God told them to offer him sacrifices?”

"I don't know; perhaps so."

"Who was the first person that promised to give the Lord a tenth of all his income?"

"I don't know; I didn't know anybody did."

"Why, father, don't you know that? Why, it was Jacob when he had left home and was on his long journey, after he had seen his wonderful vision. He promised the Lord: 'Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.' Then," continued Tommy, "you remember Abraham—"

"Waal, what's that got to do with it?" interrupted his father impatiently, "they are Jews and that is in the Old Testament. I wanted New Testament authority."

"Well," answered Tommy, after this sudden outburst, "I am going to get around to the New Testament by and by. We have to understand the Old Testament before we can understand the New. As I was saying, Abraham gave tithes or a tenth of his substance to Melchizadek. Then in Leviticus 27:30 we find that God commanded the people to give Him the tithe. 'And all the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's. It is holy unto the Lord.' Now God claimed a tenth from all the Jews, didn't he?"

"Yes," said Mr. Jenkins impatiently, "but I'm no Jew."

"I know that, and yet you have some of the characteristics of a Jew," said Tommy, almost rudely. "If God claimed a tenth, which he did, and if they didn't pay it they were robbing God, were they not?"

"I s'pose so," said Mr. Jenkins slowly.

"They were under the law, were they not?"

"I should say so," said Mr. Jenkins earnestly. "They were commanded to do this and not to do that, until life must have been a great burden. I'm thankful I ain't a Jew."

"Then we are not under the law, are we?" asked Tommy quietly.

"No" said Mr. Jenkins vigorously, "we're under the gospel."

"Do people under the law or under the gospel have the greatest light and knowledge of God and His will?"

"Why, under the gospel, I s'pose, for we have all the account of Christ's life and they didn't have it."

"Well," said Tommy deliberately, "hadn't people under the gospel ought to do as much as the Jews under the law?"

"Waal, it does look as though we ought to do as much at least," said Mr. Jenkins, slowly. "But come, I guess breakfast must be ready, for we have been a long time doing our chores. What did you want to bother me with all this lingo for? It don't amount to anything. I'm satisfied as I am."

"Well, I'm not," said Tommy vigorously, "and I am going up to Mr. Moncrief's again soon and learn some more about this subject. Say, father, you better go with me next time, for they make it a great deal plainer than I can. Won't you go?"

"Oh, I guess not. I am not interested in it."

All that day, as Mr. Jenkins was at work, the question that Tommy had asked him in the early morning: "Hadn't we under the gospel ought to do as much as the Jews under the law?" would keep coming to him again and again. He was forced to admit that we ought to do as much, and finally he admitted to himself that he ought to do even more.

Along toward night, under the continued persistency of his conscience in bringing the question before him all the time, Mr. Jenkins became angry and ejaculated aloud: "I am giving more than a tenth anyway. What's the use of all this fuss?"

Tommy, who was working near by, heard the ejaculation, but he wisely paid no attention to it, only chuckling to himself as he thought: "Well, it's troubling father anyway, and that's a good thing. It will trouble him more before we are through with the subject, or my name isn't Tommy Jenkins. I wonder if he actually thinks he gives a tenth of his income to the Lord. I'll ask him some day by and by, but not now."

The brilliant moon came above the horizon soon after dark, flooding the landscape with its mellow light, so that everything looked beautiful as it sparkled with the cold and the moonlight. The great sleighing party of the season was to be that evening. Elaborate preparations had been made and nearly all the young people of the neighborhood had been invited to participate. Some had declined for one reason or another. About fifty intended to go. The objective point was Rumford Falls. They wished to see those wonderful falls by moonlight, then have a supper at the Rumford House and then come home by a different route.

In the bustle of getting warmly tucked in and started on their sleighing trip some one noticed that Charlie Moncrief was not among the jolly party.

"Say, Tommy," called out a young man, "where's Charlie? I thought he was going with us."

"Oh, he did think he would," answered Tommy, "but he has a number of excuses. For one thing it is Saturday night."

"We don't want him anyway," spoke up a coarse looking young man. "He's a regular muff, one of the goody-goody, psalm-singing kind. I haven't any use for him."

At these derisive words Tommy came hastily forward and said hotly: "A muff is he? A goody-goody, hey? He is one of the best and smartest young men around ere. You know it and that's what ails you. He can

swim faster and do more work any day, and do it better, than you can. There is nothing you do better, except loafing and profanity; and if your father wasn't such a good man and you didn't drive such a nice team and have money to spend so freely you wouldn't be tolerated even in a sleighing party like this."

"Oh, well, well, little bantam rooster, don't get excited over it. I don't know him as well as you do, but he isn't exactly my style."



SPECKLED MOUNTAIN.

"No," said Tommy, still excitedly, "I should say he wasn't your style. You say you don't know him very well. You ought to know him. He is well worth knowing, but you ought to know enough anyway not to slander a good man. I may be a little bantam, but I can lick you and you know it. I shall, if I ever hear any more such talk about Charlie."

It was quite a procession that finally started away on that cold winter's night. There were six cutters, two two-seated sleighs, one three-seated sleigh and two wagon boxes on bobs, with ten people in one and twelve in the other.

The prancing horses, the merry jingle of bells, the merry talk and laughter and the silvery moon flooding the hills and valleys with light, was a scene that one would never forget. Over hills and through the valleys they went. There were places where the trees were so thick and dense that the moon tried in vain to penetrate the gloom. Then again, on a sudden, they would be out into the brightness, as they followed the road, which wound around the hills and over some of them.

When they were nearly at their destination and were driving along at a smart trot, the near horse on a two-seated sleigh suddenly shied sharply at a rustling in a bush, causing the other horse to swerve a little from the road so the runners left the beaten sleigh track and cut down a foot or more into the snow. This sudden tip threw the occupants of the sleigh out into the snow at the side of the road. Wrapped in blankets and robes as they were, they could not do anything to save themselves.

The four people were landed in a promiscuous heap in the snow. The reins were yanked from the driver's hands by the spirited team. The sleigh was not capsized, only tipped. It almost instantly righted itself as the horses sped away on the keen run after the other teams.

The teams behind, when they saw the accident, pulled up and helped their unfortunate companions out of the snow. No one had sustained any injuries in the fall. One young man was somewhat wet with the snow. It seems that in the sudden lurch of the sleigh he had fallen face down, and with his arms stretched out and run into the snow their full length. Another had fallen on his lower limbs, thus keeping him a prisoner long enough for the

snow on his face and neck and up his arms to melt. The people were pulled out of the snow, climbed into one of the wagon boxes and then they went on.

When the runaway team dashed behind the others they supposed that team wanted more road, so they speeded up a little, but some one in one of the forward sleighs glanced back and was startled to see no one in the sleigh that had come on so furiously. Another glance confirmed him in his first suspicion that an accident had happened. Soon, however, all was righted and the happy company renewed their journey.

Rumford House was soon reached. After warming themselves they went to see the famous falls. An hour and a half was spent in sight-seeing, then they returned to the hotel, where an ample supper awaited them.

Soon after supper the party started home, for it was a long distance back to Hillside.

CHAPTER VI.

A DESCRIPTIVE LETTER.

THE most of the young people were too tired to attend church the morning after the sleigh-ride. Tommy Jenkins and his cousin, Laura Warren, who came from her home in Illinois for a visit and went with the party, were out and were deeply impressed by the minister's sermon. The text was, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." One of the thoughts dwelt upon quite at length was a more careful observance of the Sunday. He also urged that care be taken to avoid those duties and pleasures on Saturday which would unfit one for church attendance and worship on the Lord's Day.

On their return home, Tommy was the first to speak. "Well," he said, "he didn't say so, but I guess he meant us. I guess he thought we broke the Sabbath last night."

"Well, I guess we did," said Laura candidly.

"That's all nonsense," broke out Mr. Jenkins impatiently. "Isn't Sunday given us to rest in? What are the other days given us for but to work in?"

Then followed quite a spirited discussion regarding Sunday keeping and tithing, in which it seemed as though the young people had rather the best of the argument.

On Tuesday afternoon Laura seated herself to write a long letter to her mother in Illinois:

"Dear Mother: I had a delightful trip. I stopped, as we planned I should, one day at Niagara Falls, and saw the wonders there. I will not describe the falls to you, for you have seen them so many times that any

description of mine would seem very tame. But I will describe some of the other things that impressed me. We came through the White Mountains and the scenery there is delightful. Mount Washington looms up there like a hoary monster, his sides glistening in their snowy beauty and as the sun shone upon parts of it, it did look superb and indescribably grand. I received a warm welcome at Uncle David's and I think I shall enjoy my visit here very much. Tommy has invited me to go up to Mr. Moncrief's to-night with him. You remember Mr. Moncrief's family. I met the young people Sunday and they are very nice.

Saturday night there was a great sleighing party. It seems Cousin Tommy was the prime mover in it and they had been planning it for a number of weeks. There was a full moon, which made everything look beautiful, and the sleighing was excellent, but it was cold. Cousin Tommy and I went together in a cutter. There was a large company, I think almost fifty. It was one of the most brilliant moonlight nights I ever saw. We passed through some beautiful scenery and I did enjoy looking at the hills and mountains, with their lights and shadows. I saw the same hills and mountains that you as a girl enjoyed. There was Molly Ockett Mountain, wooded to the top; Speckled Mountain, that looks as though it were about all rocks; then Black Mountain, partly rocks and partly bushes. Tommy told me that hundreds of bushels of blueberries were taken off the latter, every summer, by the people around here. Then we passed close by the precipitous face of Tumble Down Dick and I repeated, or tried to, that old piece that was in our reading book, beginning, 'Ye crags and peaks, I'm with you once again.'

The last few miles before we reached Rumford Falls the road wound around the hills and along side of the Androscoggin River. We crossed the railroad two or three times. There was no railroad up there when you

was a girl, as it has only been built a few years. The old Rumford Falls & Buckfield Railroad, which you probably remember, was leased, in 1890, to the Portland & Rumford Falls Railroad Company and in 1892 the road was built from Gilbertville to Rumford Falls. It is a fine, modern, well-equipped road. I rode on it the last few miles before I reached Uncle David's and it was very smooth and comfortable. They have a fine station at Rumford Falls. It is large and commodious, heated by steam and lighted by electricity, and it is a union station, too, for



BLACK MOUNTAIN.

the Rumford Falls & Rangely Lake Railroad Company shares the station. I have been told that that railroad reaches the headwaters of the Androscoggin River, the river that runs through Rumford Falls. Rangely Lake is the terminus of the railroad and the scenery along the route, I have been told, in wildness and grandeur is unsurpassed by any anywhere in Maine.

But, mamma, what names they do have for the lakes here; old Indian names, they tell me, and I should think they were. I suppose they sound all right enough to you, but to me they do sound queerly. Lake Anasagunticook, Maranacook Lake, Annabessacook, Mollychunkamonk and Moosetalucmaguntic Lakes. Think of it! Aren't those names awful? And yet they tell me those are the names they go by. I am getting off from my description and giving you a lot of history, but I hope it will be interesting. I tell you, it was a beautiful sight, when we rounded the curve in the road and Rumford Falls burst upon our view. A little to our left was the railroad station, a little to our right were the great mills—paper mill, pulp mill, sulphite mill, electro chemical company's works, electric light plant and some others—and a little farther on, just beyond the mills, is the business part of the town. Straight ahead of us, as we came into town, was the river, with its mighty power of water. Beyond the river was the greater portion of the city, edging away from the river and nestling against the range of hills beyond. There are hills on this side, hills on the other side, the river and the town lying between, and the beautiful heavens with the twinkling stars and the silvery moon, over all. Oh, it was indescribably beautiful! I wish I could paint it for you. I was lost in the contemplation of its beauty. Afterwards I was surprised at the power and grandeur of the falls and I was also surprised to observe how the place had developed. Instead of a wild waterfall, with wilderness all around, as it was in 1892, now the waterpower is harnessed and there is a city of five thousand inhabitants, all accomplished in three years.

I believe you never visited the falls, so I must write a few words about them, for I have been learning considerable geography lately, some that I never learned while at school, and yet I ought to have learned part of it. I learned that the Androscoggin River is one hundred

fifty-seven miles long and that it rises three thousand feet above the sea level. Here at Rumford Falls, seventy-five miles from tide water, we are six hundred feet above the sea and the water falls, in less than a mile, one hundred eighty feet. There is one fall of a hundred feet. The waterpower is immense, enormous, a minimum of forty-two thousand horse power. This power is guaranteed in all seasons by a great storage system of four dams and one hundred twenty-three square miles of lakes in the forest regions of the river head waters. I have been quoting from a little book descriptive of the falls, which uncle has, for I never could remember all these facts and figures. I will quote a few more sentences: 'This great cataract is known far and wide as the Niagara of New England; indeed, there is nothing equal to it east of Niagara Falls. The power here available exceeds that of the three largest manufacturing cities of New England.' Think of it! More power than at Lowell, Lawrence and Haverhill, and I have always heard of their great waterpower. I was surprised and astonished, but why did it remain undeveloped for so long, I wonder. I never shall forget the wonder and power of the falls, and the beauty was so sublime, so majestic, so exquisite, that I have dreamed about it since. I never saw anything like it. Not even Niagara was like it, for I didn't see Niagara Falls by moonlight, on a winter evening.

I don't very often write as long a letter as this one is and I will not tire you very often by such an epistle of geography and history. Your loving daughter,

LAURA."

CHAPTER VII.

A STRANGE DREAM.

TOMMY had planned to spend Tuesday evening with Charlie Moncrief, in order that he might continue his search for verses on Bible giving. Laura heartily accepted the invitation to go with Tommy, and after much coaxing, Mr. Jenkins was persuaded to accompany them.

Laura received a cordial welcome in the Moncrief home and almost immediately she unconsciously turned the conversation on the subject of special study. As Charlie was not among the sleighing party, Laura asked the reason. It was Tommy, however, who replied.

"I think I know now, Charlie," said he, "why you didn't go. I rather think I got an idea of it last Sunday morning in the sermon. You didn't want to break the Sabbath. Isn't that it?"

"Yes," replied Charlie, "that's part of it."

"Oh, that's only a part of it," said Tommy; "well, what's the rest of it?"

"I told you," said Charlie, "that I would tell you if you didn't discover why before we got done discussing this subject."

"You better tell us now, it might help us in our study," urged Tommy.

Charlie hesitated, but finally said: "Well, I will tell you, if you really want to know."

"We really do," said Tommy, heartily.

Being afraid of breaking the Sabbath, was one of my reasons, but I have another one, and it is this: I didn't feel that it was right to afford it."

"Afford it," said Tommy, hastily, "you wouldn't have had to hire a team. You could have gone with your own horse and cutter. It wouldn't have cost you anything."

"Wouldn't it?" said Charlie quietly, "how much did your supper and your horse's supper cost you?"

"Fifty cents each for people and twenty-five cents apiece for the horses," said Tommy quickly, "but everything was first-class, it was well worth it."

"I do not doubt it," said Charlie, "but it would have cost me at least a dollar and a quarter and I did not feel that it would be right. We could have afforded it if we had thought it was best, but we didn't any of us feel as though it was right to spend a dollar and a quarter on one evening's pleasure, just for self, when I can only give twenty-five cents a Sunday for the Lord's work. It looked as though I thought five times as much of self as I did of the Lord."

"I don't see as that applies," said Tommy; "isn't it right to spend money on one's self? Didn't you and your father earn the money? Isn't it yours?"

"No," said Charlie, "it isn't mine to do with as I please. It is only mine in trust. I am a steward and I must render my account to God. The land is God's, for He made it. The wind, rain and sunshine are God's. He makes the food nourish me, so that I have power to work, so the money is also His, but for me to use wisely. How true the words of the Bible are: 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou boast as though thou hadst not received it?'"

"So you didn't feel that it was right for you to spend a dollar and a quarter," said Tommy, incredulously.

"Not for mere pleasure," said Charlie. "If it had been necessary, or if it would have done anyone any good, why, that would have been another matter. But I can go another time and see the falls a great deal longer than you saw them, learn more, and have just as good a

time, aside from the supper, as you had and at a fraction of the cost."

"Well, I wouldn't be so particular," said Tommy. "I wouldn't think life worth living if I couldn't go to dances and play cards when I please. I think I would soon die."

"Waal, I reckon the evenin' will be gone and you won't have anything done but talking unless you get at it pretty soon," remarked Mr. Jenkins, turning away from Mr. Moncrief, with whom he had been chatting pleasantly, and looking toward the group of earnest young people at the other side of the room. "Here 'tis after eight o'clock now, and I want to go home by nine."

"Oh, we've been learning a great deal this evening," said Tommy, brightly. "We have learned why Charlie didn't go to Rumford Falls on Saturday night, and that is right along the line of our study for to-night. He governs his life by two or three great principles, while my life runs along haphazard like. But, come, let's to the business of the evening for a while," continued Tommy, briskly.

"But, does the New Testament tell us anywhere that we must give a tenth?" asked Mr. Jenkins earnestly.

"No," replied Charles, "I think it does not. Neither does the New Testament command us anywhere to keep one day in seven holy unto the Lord. It speaks as though it was an established thing that all believers should rest and worship one day in seven. You do it, and yet there is no New Testament command for it."

"All right, I didn't believe it did. That is all I want to know," said Mr. Jenkins, rising. "I'm ready to go home now. I didn't believe the New Testament said any such thing as Tommy stuck to it that it did."

"Don't hurry," said Mr. Moncrief, cordially. "If the New Testament does not plainly command the giving of a tenth, it certainly teaches it in unmistakable terms. So sit down and listen to some of it."

"Waal, I dunno as it will do me any good, but I might stay a half hour or so, now I'm here," said Mr. Jenkins, seating himself.

"Where shall we look?" asked Tommy.

"Yes, you better find some of the proof if there is any in the New Testament, if you want to convince me," said Mr. Jenkins, doggedly, "for I don't take no stock in all your surmisings and theorizings an' no proof. I want the verses for it. The Old Testament was for the Jews an' not for me, for I'm no Jew!"

"All right, we will give you some Bible pretty soon," said Charlie, "but first I want to ask a few questions."

"You acknowledge that the Jews gave a tenth, and in many instances more than a tenth, and that God commanded them to give that tenth, do you not?" asked Charlie, addressing Mr. Jenkins.

"Waal, I s'pose so, judging from all I have heard about it, but I reckon I don't know, for I never found any of it in the Bible."

"But you remember that God says: 'The tithe is holy unto me,'" persisted Charlie.

"Yes, I have heard so."

"Well, that law was never annulled, or set aside, or outgrown, was it? Do we find anywhere that it says: 'That law is no longer in force; the necessity for it has passed and so the law has ceased to exist?'" said Charlie.

"No, I never heard there was anything like that in the Bible," said Mr. Jenkins.

"Well, then, the law still exists," said Charlie, firmly.

"How! Why!" ejaculated Mr. Jenkins.

"Let me read you an extract from an article by N. P. Bailey, to answer those questions and explain what I mean," said Charlie. "Mr. Bailey says:

'Now it is a rule, both in law and also in morals and religion, that the reason for a law remaining the law itself remains. Was there then any reason for paying

tithe under the Mosaic dispensation that does not remain under the Christian dispensation. If not, then the law of the tithe remains in full force unless it has been formally repealed. But no such repeal is found. The reasons for paying tithes under the Mosaic law, as well as before that law, were love and gratitude to God as the giver of every blessing and the source of all prosperity in business; also, as an expression of loyalty to God and to His government as supreme. Then do not all these reasons remain and rest with equal weight upon all Christians to-day? The Old Testament law required supreme love to God. We see it in Deuteronomy 6:5: 'And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might.' The New Testament law requires the same. Matthew 22:37: 'Jesus said unto him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' John 14:23-24: 'Jesus answered and said unto him: If a man love me he will keep my words and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine but the Father's which sent me.' Romans 13:10: 'Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.' So, too, the uses to which God devoted the tithe under the former dispensation, remain under the present one, and hence the use of it now. As the tithe was the Lord's He required its use in matters of religion and worship. He appropriated it

1. To the support of the priests and Levites;
2. The supplies for the altars;
3. To the many other expenses of the temple service;
4. To help the poor.

So, now, God still has a church and a ministry and requires worship and these involve expense and so He demands the payment of the tithe to meet these expenses.

The church is the Lord's and the ministry is the Lord's and the tithe is also His and is to be used to support His church and ministry. All these reasons for the law of the tithe remaining, the law itself must remain. So then everyone, old and young, rich and poor, is still bound by the law of love and loyalty to God and His church, to pay the tenth of his income for the support of the Christian church, whether the income is large or small, whether it is from land, or from trade, or from salary, or from interest on loans and other investments, or from day labor, or from any other source. For the tithe is the Lord's and not to pay it is robbing Him and that is a sure way to bring down His displeasure, for no man is too poor to be honest. Hence, no man is so poor that he can afford to rob God and then expect His blessing. Let the poor man, and also the rich man, remember that nine-tenths of income with God's blessing is far better than ten-tenths without His blessing."

"Isn't that good?" said Charlie, drawing a deep breath, after he had finished reading the article.

"Waal, I don't see as it proves anything," said Mr. Jenkins, "he only reasons. He don't take the Bible for it."

"Well, I think it is very clear reasoning," said Laura, who had not spoken for some time, but had been paying strict attention to all that was passing.

"And," continued Laura, "Uncle here wants some verses from the New Testament. I have a couple of verses that I wish to read now, if you will allow me."

"Certainly," said Charlie, "we shall be very glad to hear them now."

"Well," said Laura, "the verses are I Cor. 16: 1 and 2: 'Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come.' The revised version reads,"

continued Laura, “‘Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store as he may prosper that no collections be made when I come.’ Now, let me read a good explanation of that passage, written by Rev. Fred T. Gates. He says: ‘The several clauses of this Scripture should be carefully considered:

1. Now, concerning the collection for the saints; this then was a recognized and accepted object of current church-giving. It continued, we suppose, so long as the



THE GRIST MILL.

need continued, or as long as the opportunity was afforded. It was of the nature of a regular object of current church benefactions. ‘As I gave order * * so do ye.’ The apostle is imperative. The matter is not left to the convenience or discretion of those to whom He writes.

2. ‘On the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store.’ The laying by was to be on the

Lord's day. It was therefore to be an act of worship.

3. 'On the Lord's day * * ' Regularly and habitually therefore, as the income was received. It was to be weekly, rather than monthly or yearly, because, as we suppose, the majority of the Corinthians received their income weekly. The principle involved is that of giving the first fruits, that of laying by from the income as soon as possible after any receipts.

4. 'Lay by in store as he may prosper.' Proportionately, therefore. The sum each time laid by was to be proportionate to the amount received.

5. The Apostle does not here command the giver to choose a proportion that he must invariably and under all circumstances employ. The percentage itself may be changed with varying prosperity.

6. The Apostle commands each to lay by in store on the first day of the week, rather than to hand in on the first day of the week, obviously because he was absent at this time and no provision had as yet been made for the reception of the gifts. This belongs to the local coloring of system.

7. Paul elsewhere says that officers must eventually be appointed to receive and convey the gifts to their destination. Now, the system which we commend above, exactly fulfills the spirit and purpose of the Apostolic rules at every point, divesting them of what is merely local. It provides for all current objects of church bestowment, according to (1) Each one should lay by in store, as an act of worship;

According to (2) As nearly as possible at the time of receipt;

According to (3) A proportion of his income;

According to (4) This itself may be varied with varying prosperity;

According to (5) And that he shall deposit this on the Lord's day;

According to (6 and 7) With a chosen officer of the church for distribution.

The system is thus designed obediently to meet the spirit of the Apostolic requirements. That the rules of conduct laid down in the epistles are everywhere obligatory, is admitted by all Christians; even where individuals or churches are specifically addressed, the principle involved in any command is held to be universally binding.

It happened moreover in case of this particular epistle, that though it is addressed first to the Corinthians, it is written not only to them, but to all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours. (1 Cor. 1:2.)

Paul states thus in the beginning of the letter that the rules of conduct set forth in this epistle are designed to be universal. In case of the particular admonition we are now studying, we have still further evidence of universality of application, for the Apostle says he has ordered the churches of Galatia to do the same thing.

The plan of benefaction set forth in this passage was employed during the early centuries of the church. (See Uhlhorn's Christian Charity in the Ancient Church). It is evident that the Holy Spirit designed the practice of proportionate weekly giving for all objects of regular benefaction to be a fixed and authoritative rule of the Christian life. It is therefore obligatory upon me.' "

"There Uncle David, there is a New Testament verse for you, and I have read you the explanation of it. Now what do you think of that?" said Laura when she had finished reading.

Mr. Jenkins, who had sat during the reading by Laura of the Bible verses and explanation, with an indifferent, stubborn, almost angry look on his face, turned slowly as his niece addressed him and looking at her, rose to his feet, and said almost savagely:

"I think it's time to go hum."

"Wait a minute father," said Tommy quickly, "that verse that was just read is in the New Testament; do you want to see it?" and reaching over he took the Bible from Laura's hand and held it up for his father to look at; "there it is, the first and second verses of the sixteenth chapter of First Corinthians."

"I heard Laura read it. I don't want to see it," growled Mr. Jenkins. "Why do I need to read it?"

"I wanted you to be sure these verses were in the New Testament," said Tommy; "that was all, as long as you know they are there I am satisfied. Now I s'pose you will do it," continued Tommy.

"Do what?" said Mr. Jenkins thoroughly surprised and aroused.

"Why, what you said you would, live up to all the New Testament teaching on giving," said Tommy.

"Waal, don't I give," said Mr. Jenkins quickly. "If 't isn't regular subscription, it's an extra collection. Then I have to give to every social that comes along. I give more now than the old Jews did."

"But you don't follow the New Testament," said Tommy doggedly. "You do not know how much you give, and you never lay it by in a separate place on the first day of the week as an act of worship."

"Waal, there's somethin' special mos' every week that I give to. A collection for poor people, or a poor church somewhere, or heathen in Afriker, or the Indians in the territory, or the Niggers in the South, or some other fol-de-rol, so I think I follow th' Bible."

"Well, Uncle, let me read you some more of this tract," said Laura. "Here is some about collections I would like to read."

"Can't stop to-night," broke in Mr. Jenkins; "here it is a quarter past nine now, an' time all decent farmers were in bed."

"Well, come up again," said Mr. Moncrief heartily.

"Yes, do," said Charlie. "I wanted to say something about socials, but I see I can not to-night."

"Could I take this tract home with me to-night? I would like to read the rest of it," said Laura.

"Certainly," said Charlie, "and any others that I have that you want."

"Thank you; this will do for to-night."

"Well, when will you be up again?" said Charlie to Tommy, as the sleigh came to the door.

"I don't know. Before many days, perhaps. We might next Tuesday evening, couldn't we, father?"

"I'll come up visitin', but I ain't coming up again to study the Bible," growled Mr. Jenkins.

"Couldn't all of you people come down to our place next Tuesday evening?" asked Tommy.

"Yes, do," said Mr. Jenkins, evidently sorry for his rudeness.

"Perhaps we might," said Mr. Moncrief.

"All right. We'll look for you then," said Mr. Jenkins, as the sleigh drove away.

"Mr. Jenkins does not want to be convinced, does he?" said Charlie as they went into the house.

"I fear not," said Mr. Moncrief, sadly. "But we must be kind and patient, and perhaps by and by the Spirit may open his eyes."

Mr. Jenkins confided to his wife after he reached home, that he had got into a hornet's nest that evening, "and that Laura seems to be as much interested as any of them, an' they are all to be here next Tuesday night, an' I s'pose I shall get some more stings."

The truths that Mr. Jenkins had heard that evening seemed to trouble him, so that he did not sleep as well as usual and he also had a horrible dream.

He thought he was busy piling up silver dollars. He would pile one on top of another until he had one

hundred in a pile, and then make a new pile. He had a good many piles all made, and was working away hard and fast when he noticed a long line of men passing him. There were people of all nationalities there. He saw Chinese, Africans, Indians and many others. They looked tired, hungry, cold and unhappy. One said, "give us some food, please;" another said, "give us some clothing and shelter;" another one said, "give us the Gospel of Christ which you have."

"Yes," said Mr. Jenkins, "I'll help you, but I can't take off of my full piles. I'll have to wait until I get them all piled up and see if there are a few left, then I'll help you." Then one that he hadn't noticed before said: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to these ye did it not to me." In his sleep Mr. Jenkins recognized his Lord and in terror he awoke.

Mr. Jenkins was moody and taciturn all the next day and he seemed deep in his own thoughts, which were not very pleasant, judging by his looks and actions.

The sermon on Sunday did not tend to quiet his thoughts. It was a plain, practical, loving, Gospel sermon from the text, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." The minister emphasized the necessity for action, not alone thinking, not alone hearing, not alone knowing, but doing was essential to the full following of Christ."

CHAPTER VIII.

AT MR. JENKINS' HOME.

Laura never tired of admiring the scenery around her uncle's home. The moonlight evenings were her special delight. She had been accustomed to moonlight nights on the prairies, but not among the hills and mountains, and to her the scene was surpassingly beautiful.

On Tuesday evening before Mr. Moncrief and family should arrive she wandered out for a little stroll in the frosty air. She wanted to drink in the wonders of nature and praise and adore Nature's God. While she was admiring the scene she heard sleigh bells and they seemed to be rapidly approaching. It proved to be Mr. Moncrief and his family. Greetings were exchanged, the horses put away and soon they were comfortably seated in the parlor. The wood in the little old-fashioned parlor stove snapped and burned away lustily, giving out a generous amount of heat.

"I hear you are a good musician, Mabel," said Mr. Moncrief, "but I have not heard you play yet. You had better give us a tune while we are eating these nice apples."

Apples were raised in such abundance and of such nice quality that no evening was spent without a good dish of them, and no visitor called, much less spent an evening, without having all the apples he wished to eat.

"Well! that is nice, Mabel. That is fine music. I didn't know you could play so well," said Mr. Moncrief appreciatively, after Mabel had finished playing.

"Yaas, she does purty well," said Mr. Jenkins, "but it costs a sight of money."

"Well hasn't it paid?" asked Mr. Moncrief.

"Waal, I reckon so, an' yet I dunno."

"You have very fine apples," said Mr. Moncrief, appreciatively.

"Yaas, they are purty fair," replied Mr. Jenkins.

"We would like to hear a piece played by Laura. Won't you favor us?" asked Mrs. Moncrief.

Laura believed that if she could add to anyone's happiness it was her duty and privilege to do so, and readily consented to play.

"That is very nice," said Mrs. Moncrief, as Laura took her seat. "I am very fond of music, but I don't play any more; my fingers are too old and stiff. Charlie plays a little, but we haven't anything good to play on. We have an old organ, partly out of tune."

"I would like to hear Charlie play," said Laura.

"I am better at playing on the woodpile with saw and axe than I am at making music on an organ. Mother ought not to have spoken about it, for I cannot play much," said Charlie.

"He is a good hand at the woodpile, or tapping trees or holding the plow, but I like to hear him play, too," said Mrs. Moncrief, with motherly pride.

"When do you tap trees?" asked Laura, quickly.

"Why, pretty soon, if these warm days keep on. It thawed a great deal to-day."

"But it is cold to-night," said Laura.

"Yes," said Charlie, "that is just the kind of weather that makes sap run, but it takes a few warm days to start the sap from the roots. Then if it freezes nights and thaws days the sap will run."

"There will be a fine crust to-morrow morning, for it has thawed considerable to-day," said Tommy.

"If it is bright and clear in the morning I think I shall tap two or three trees just to try it and see whether they will run or not," said Charlie.

"I would like to see you," said Laura, earnestly.

"Well, why don't you then? You, Mabel and Tommy come up to-morrow morning. But you better not come very early, because the sap won't start until late as it is so cold to-night. But you come and we will go up to our wood-lot and tap a few trees. Bring your sled along. Tommy, your new double-runner, and we will coast back."

"Won't that be fine!" said Laura, enthusiastically. "I never went coasting on a hill that amounted to anything. When I was a very small girl I slid down a ridge and into a slough, but that was a very short distance."

"Well," said Charlie, "if the snow has not thawed off of some of the stone walls we can start up at our wood-lot and slide clear down to the lake, a distance of about a mile and a half. We can go right over the fences, I think, for the snows have been deep this winter. We will have to cross the road once, but I think we can do it without tipping over, for I have crossed the road many a time."

"Why," said Laura, "don't you go in the road?"

"No," said Charlie, "an ordinary narrow sled runs better on the crust than in the road. When we slide in the road we take the big horse sled. That will run nicely and keep in the tracks, but it is heavy to haul back, that is the only trouble with it."

"We will go to-morrow morning if we can," said Laura and Mabel.

"We ain't very busy now," said Tommy, "for we have our wood pile all cut up; so if the girls want to go, I guess we'll all go along."

"By the way, Laura, did you read the rest of that tract that you took home the other night?" said Charlie.

"Yes," said Laura, "I read it and enjoyed it very much."

"What's that you've been reading?" inquired Mr. Jenkins.

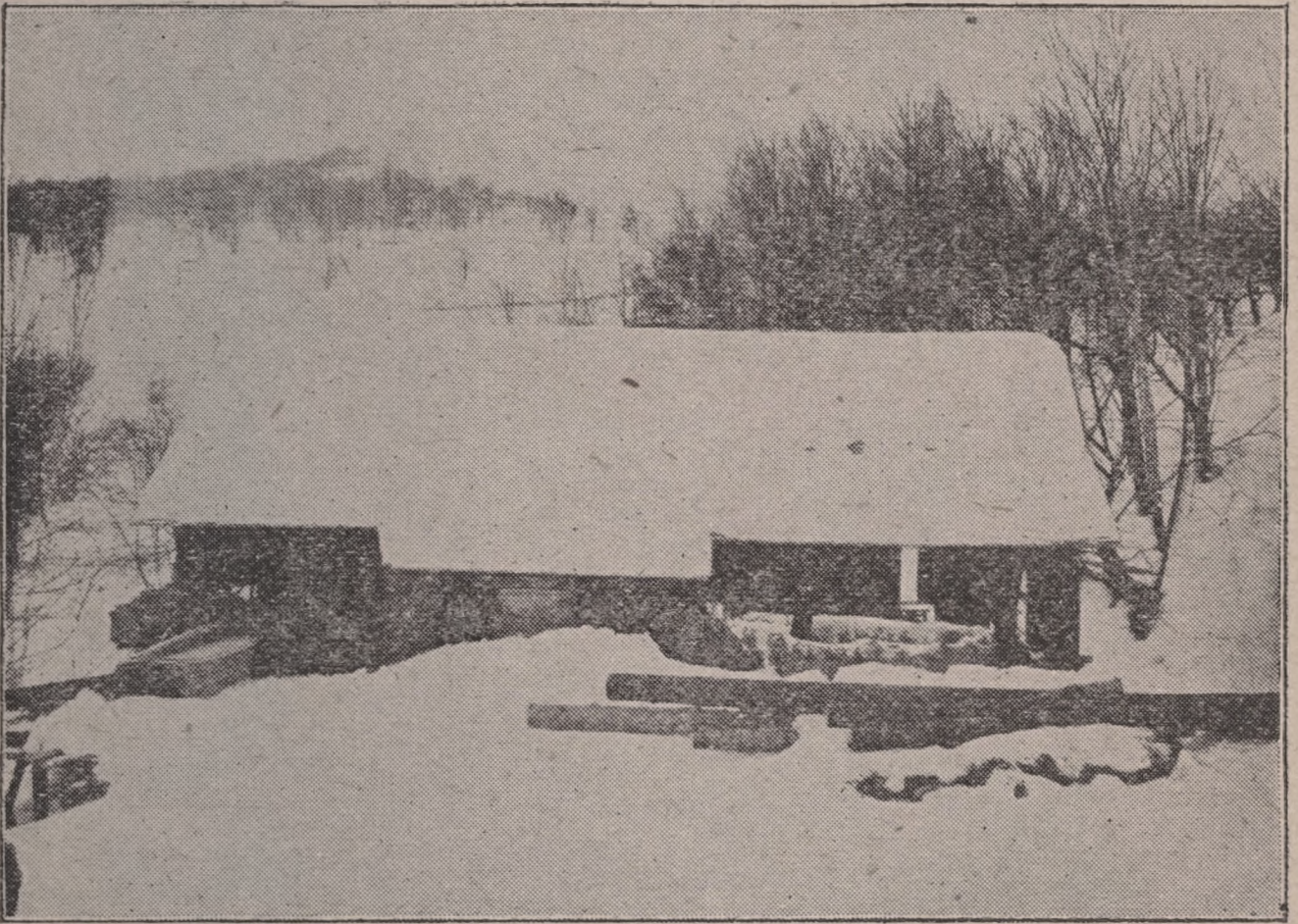
"Why," said Laura, "you remember the tract that I read a part of the other night while we were at Mr. Moncrief's? I want you to hear some more of it to-night, for it is along the same line as we were talking about the other night:"

"Observe finally in this passage (1 Cor. 16:1, 2) that the apostle lays down this rule for one reason, to avoid the very method of benevolence now current among our churches, the method of collections. 'Do this,' he says, 'that no collections be made when I come.' A collection is sometimes better than nothing. The apostle intimates that he would be obliged to resort to a collection if the Corinthians should disobey him by failing to lay by in store regularly and proportionately as he commands them. The collection which the apostle wished to avoid would have been precisely such, doubtless, as we are accustomed to take. Now, collections the apostle seeks to prevent. He wishes to avoid them by forestalling the need of them by regular and proportionate giving. Let us pause here a moment to consider the objections to taking the collections. It is enough indeed that the Scripture names it for condemnation. But, the condemnation appears more vivid and reasonable if we consider the probable grounds upon which it rests. All bestowments should be made directly to God, spontaneously in worshipful recognition of His providential care and of His ownership of all we have. The church is subtly inducted into the error that the duty of giving springs primarily out of the fact of the appeal and that, if no appeal were made, no obligation exists. They are tempted to look on all appeals as innovations of their peace or impositions on their good nature. The system so numbing to the churches has a peculiar reflex influence on our denominational societies. It tends to degrade

them into mere machines for extracting money from unwilling churches and of necessity it must tempt them to unholy rivalry and jealousy. The system is unworthy in that it secures, for God's service, not 'the first fruits of our increase,' but any fruits that happen to be on hand."

"Well, that is fine," said Mr. Moncrief, as Laura finished reading. "I never heard it better stated in my life, although it is about what I have believed for many years."

Mr. Jenkins evidently did not share the enthusiasm of Mr. Moncrief for the tract that had just been read.



SAW MILL.

But before he could have said anything, if he had been so inclined, Tommy turned the conversation into another channel by inquiring of Charlie if he was going to the social on Friday night.

“What kind of a social is it? Is it a kissing social, an eating social, a money social or just a social?” asked Charlie.

“It is a social for the benefit of the pastor over there on the ridge. They want to pay up some of his salary. It is to be at Mr. David Corbett’s. You know they have a large fine house.”

“Yes,” said Charlie, “I know where it is. He has a fine place and a large farm, but I hardly think I shall go.”

CHAPTER IX.

SOMETHING ABOUT SOCIALS.

TOMMY was not a little disappointed at Charlie's answer and quickly said: "Why not? I wanted you to go with us in the double sleigh; we four. We could have a jolly time. I am surprised at you, for I supposed you wanted to do good."

"But I am not sure but that I would be doing harm instead of good," said Charlie.

"Why? How?" asked Tommy, in amazement. "Ain't it doing good to help pay a hard working, poor minister's salary?"

"Yes," replied Charlie, "if you do it in the right way, but there are ways that really do the people more harm than good."

"Why, what harm is there in having a good social time, a good supper and giving so much toward the minister's salary?"

"How much do you give?" asked Charlie, quietly.

"Why, as much as they ask," said Tommy, quickly. "A man would be foolish to give more than he had to."

"Do you give that money, or do you pay for what you get?"

"Well, I usually get my money's worth," said Tommy. "If I don't, I don't usually go again."

"You have been to Lewiston, haven't you?" asked Charlie, as though he had started on a new subject.

"Yes," said Tommy, wonderingly. "I have been there a good many times. I have been there once this winter."

"You go into a restaurant there occasionally and get your dinner, do you not?" continued Charlie.

"Yes," said Tommy, "nearly every time I am there I do that."

"It usually costs you about twenty-five cents, doesn't it?"

"Yes," answered Tommy, still with wonder in his voice.

"Well, do you give him anything?"

"No. I can't afford it. It costs me enough without making him any present."

"I mean," said Charlie, "In paying for your dinner is it a gift that you make to him?"

"No," said Tommy, "I pay him for just what I eat and nothing more."

"Is there any giving on either side, then?"

"I should think not," said Tommy. "He sells me the victuals and I pay for them."

"Well," said Charlie, "are you giving anything when you pay twenty-five cents for a good supper at a church social?"

"Well, I never," said Tommy slowly. "No, I don't suppose I am giving anything, but I never thought of it before. But my money helps to pay the minister's salary and he would not get it if I didn't go and eat supper. It doesn't look as though I was doing any real giving but I had always supposed I was. In fact I thought I gave a great deal because I always attended all the socials and took a girl or two and so left from fifty cents to a dollar behind me. But, isn't there any real giving anywhere there?"

"Yes," said Charlie, "there are some who give. The people who plan and work for the social, those who cook for it, those who manage it on that evening. They are giving of their time, of their strength, of their groceries, in cooking, of their thought and brain work. Also, in

reality they give all the money that is taken in, for they simply run an eating house for awhile to get money whereby they can pay their preacher, for the money depends usually on the quality and quantity of the supper."

"Where did you learn all this?" asked Tommy, with wonder and amazement in his voice.

"Out of the Bible," answered Charlie, "and books and tracts and by prayer and meditation."

"Well, how are socials wrong? They have to have them, for they must have money. If they didn't have money to pay the preachers the churches would be closed. I imagine you would be one of the last ones to think we had better allow that."

"That is so," said Charlie. "I do not believe the churches should close, but many of the smaller ones are closed, and just because they have depended on money socials to run them and have not depended on God and followed His word."

"You asked me how socials for money are wrong and how we should raise the money if not that way. If you care to listen I shall be pleased to explain it to you the best I can."

"Oh, yes, we want to hear it," said Tommy. "Fire ahead. We are all listening, I guess."

"Our minister could explain this a great deal better than I can," said Charlie; "I wish he were here."

"Well, I don't," said Tommy, dryly. "I shouldn't dare to ask any questions if he were here, and now I can expose my ignorance all I have a mind to."

"Mr. Powell is a good man," said Charlie quickly, "and would be glad to talk these things over with you."

"Oh, I know he is a good man," said Tommy, "but I am kind of afraid of ministers anyway."

"Well, you don't need to be," said Charlie. "If you knew Mr. Powell—well, you wouldn't need to be afraid of him. But I am going to explain about money socials,"

continued Charlie. "I want to say that I believe in socials."

"You do!" exclaimed Tommy. "I thought you didn't by what you said."

"Oh, yes," said Charlie, "I believe in socials. Socials are for sociability, for interchange of thought, for helpfulness, for renewing acquaintances and making new ones, for winning people to the church and to accept Christ, and not for the purpose of feeding people and getting them good-natured while we extract a little money from their pockets, making the extracting of the money the chief end of the social, and everything else subordinated to that. Now, Christ gave us rules for church government and church discipline and also principles that should govern all our Christian life. Paul elaborates some of them more fully than Christ did and explains and illustrates them. But, do you suppose that Christ would be explicit and definite about other things and in finances leave us to manage and scheme and plan, and resort to all sorts of expedients just as we had a mind to—to raise the pastor's salary and other church expenses?"

"You wouldn't suppose he would," said Tommy.

"Well, neither has he," said Charlie. "We studied about his way the other night. 'Let every one of you upon the first day of the week lay by him in store as God hath prospered you that there be no gatherings when I come.' We are going to find out some more about God's way pretty soon. As to the harm there is in socials for money: As I look at it now, we are tacitly allowing the young men and women to think they are giving when in reality they are not giving anything, thus leading them away from the Bible method and teaching them a great error. As one writer has said: 'There is an aversion to giving a great deal of money right out. It cuts us unless we first benumb the sore

spot with ice cream and oysters. So, instead of making duty to God the all-absorbing motive, we place the utterly unworthy and inferior motive, "the pleasing of self," not only alongside of, but far above the other, practically making the duty to God of no effect.' Then, another reason against money socials is that there are some large families that are poor, or that are not rich by any means. If they are conscientious and give considerable to the Lord in support of the church they cannot afford to go to every social and if it was a social for sociability they could go as a family."

"If every Christian lived up to the Lord's way," continued Charlie, "the salaries of the ministers would be promptly paid and would be larger than they are now; the poor would be provided for; the missionary societies could send out double the missionaries they do now and a very small church would not need to be pastorless, for ten wage-earning families could support a pastor; for a true shepherd would live as his people did. Then they could give as they were able out of the nine tenths, and the pastor the same."

"One great thing about the tithe system is that the Lord regulates the amount of your tithe or the amount of money that comes from your tithe, for he can give you small returns on your farm and so His portion would be small. Or, he can give you a fine oat, corn and hay crop, while your cattle and horses will do well, thus bringing into the Lord's treasury a large amount."

"My, what a talker you are," said Tommy. "I didn't know you could talk so. You will be a preacher before we know it."

"We are all preachers," answered Charlie, "preaching something, but I don't ever expect to stand in a pulpit and preach. I believe the Lord wants business men and farmers who will be true to him in all things, who will love and trust and obey him, in fact will be good stewards."

"What do you mean by good steward" asked Tommy. "You used that word the other night and I have been wanting you to explain it, for I don't understand what you mean."

"All right, I'll explain it, but some other night, because I think we ought to go home now. Why, it is almost ten o'clock. I did not realize it was getting so late."

"You, Laura and Mabel, will be up by eight o'clock, will you?"

"Yes, if nothing happens," said Tommy.

"All right. Good-night all."

CHAPTER X.

"ON THE CRUST."

THE sun rose beautifully clear on Wednesday morning and Laura was in high spirits, with the prospect of the morning's pleasure, which would be a new experience to her, but not to Mabel and Tommy.

After doing up the morning work at the barn and in the house they started off across the fields and pastures on the hard crust, Tommy taking his double runner with him. They soon arrived at Mr. Moncrief's, where Charlie was awaiting them, having provided himself with a brace and bit, hammer, spiles and four tin pails. Putting the things on Tommy's double runner they started for the sap woods, half a mile away. It was up hill all the way so they had to walk, but they knew they could slide coming back. The walk in the brisk morning air was delightful and they soon arrived at the sap orchard, where Charlie proceeded immediately to tap a big rock-maple tree.

"Is this a rock-maple?" asked Laura.

"Oh, yes," replied Charlie; "we do not tap anything else here."

"What do they call it rock-maple for?" continued Laura.

"Because of its hardness. It is much harder than any of the other kinds."

"Well, how do you know this is a rock-maple?" persisted Laura.

"By the looks of it," replied Charlie. "Do you see that large tree off there?" continued Charlie, pointing to the right of him; "you notice those buds are large, while

those on this tree are small. That is the best way that you can tell the trees apart, but there are other ways to anyone that is used to it. I can tell a rock-maple by the looks of it, for it has a different look than any other tree. In fact the trees are a great deal like the human family, nearly all alike and yet all different. What a wonderful Creator we have."

"Yes," said Laura reverently, "a wonderful God! None just alike and yet all nearly alike. Why don't you tap that tree?" asked Laura, as they passed a tall, stately looking tree.

"That wouldn't make any syrup. That's an oak tree," said Charlie, keeping his face straight with an effort.

"What is the matter with this tree?" continued Laura.

"We would tap that tree if we wanted vinegar," said Charlie, "for that is a white birch and the sap is sour instead of being sweet."

Charlie soon tapped another good large rock-maple, but the sap did not start readily as it had not really thawed out yet.

"I think we had better go coasting for awhile," said Charlie, "until the trees thaw out." Leaving the tools, they went to the edge of the sap woods and all four of the young folks arranged themselves comfortably on the long double runner and started down the hill.

The crust was smooth and hard and so they went rapidly across the pasture and over the stone wall at the side of the road. Then into the sleigh tracks and horse path they went with a bump and bounce, but they did not tip over. Over another stone wall they went on the drifts, their speed increasing perceptibly for the next half-mile. Then they gradually slowed down, as they were on the level ground bordering the lake. When they finally stopped they were well out on the lake.

Laura's eyes were dancing with excitement caused by the rapid ride, and her cheeks were rosy from the contact with the sharp air. She exclaimed with enthusiasm, "That is fun! I never had such a ride before. How far did we come?"

"Oh, over a mile and a half," replied Charlie.

"Now comes the draw back," said Tommy.

"That is nothing," said Laura, laughingly, "it is good for us."

"Say," said Tommy, abruptly, "did you see how father squirmed in his chair last night while you were talking about giving?"

"No," said Charlie, "I didn't notice him much. I was too busy, I guess."

"I am afraid father does not like to give any too well, neither does he really care to hear a great deal about it," said Mabel.

"Well, I think he will hear more before we are through with him," said Tommy. "I only hope it will cause him to change his ways."

"We hope and pray it may," said Charlie, earnestly.

"I wonder if the sap has begun to run yet," said Laura.

"It ought to be starting," said Charlie, "for the sun is getting quite warm; and notice the crust is beginning to soften up on top considerable. It has taken us quite a while to walk back."

Upon reaching the sap-woods again they went immediately to the two trees that had been tapped. They found the sap dropping rapidly from the spiles.

"I believe I will tap two more trees," said Charlie, and if those two run as well as these two that I have tapped I believe I will go to the house and get some more spiles and dishes and tap some more. Our woodpile is all worked up and we are ready to sap it for a business."

"What do you do when these pails are full?" asked Laura.

"Oh, gather it," said Tommy.

"That is pretty thin," said Laura, "you don't eat that, do you?"

"We have to boil it first," said Mabel, laughing.

"Didn't you ever see a tree tapped before?" asked Tommy.

"I saw one tapped once, but I was such a little girl that I do not remember much about it, only that a man made a hole in a tree, put in a piece of wood and something ran out of the tree, but I never saw it but once I believe."

"Well," said Tommy, "to make syrup we boil this stuff down. It takes from twenty to twenty-five gallons of this sap to make one gallon of good, thick syrup. The first sap is always the best of the season. It is sweeter and makes nicer syrup and whiter sugar."

"I remember," said Laura, "although at the time I asked my foolish questions I had forgotten it. I remember reading about sapping it and seeing pictures of the great iron kettles strung on the poles."

"Oh, ho," said Tommy with a laugh, "do you think we boil our sap like that? Why, it is as much as fifty years since anyone around here has boiled their sap that way. We have great galvanized iron sap pans about six feet long, three feet wide and eight inches deep. I believe Charlie's folks here have three such pans set with brick arches. Where is your sap house, Charlie?"

"Up there where the trees are so thick, just beyond those two big spruces. Yes, we have three big pans and two small ones for house use. We can boil the sap away pretty fast, but there is something a great deal better, so they claim, than these great pans. That is an evaporator. I went down to Hebron one day early last spring and saw one in use. It is about the size of one of our pans.

The sap runs in at one end slowly and then in what you might call little flat troughs an inch or even an inch and a half wide. It keeps going back and forth, back and forth, across the pan, all the time going towards the other end from where it entered. Then it runs out syrup. It runs in cold sap at one end and runs out syrup at the other, and the thickness is regulated by the inflow."

"I should think that would be fine," said Laura, "but what's a sugaring off?"

"A sugaring off," said Charlie, "is where we boil the thick syrup down until it turns to sugar and we put it in little fancy tins or into tubs, or we make dry sugar of it."

"But an invitation to a sugaring-off social means that there is to be a gathering of young people and two or three gallons of syrup will be boiled down until just before it is ready to grain, just at the stage that is known as maple wax or candy. Then they put this on snow in pans and it is delicious eating. Every one eats all he wants, so it is a delightful, sweet, sticky time."

"We had better go home now," said Tommy, "for the crust is thawing fast and it will not hold much longer. It wouldn't be very nice up here in the woods if the snow slumps, especially for you girls."

They slid rather slowly, because of the softening crust, down to Mr. Moncrief's. Refusing an invitation to visit a while and stay to dinner they soon arrived at Mr. Jenkins'.

That afternoon Laura wrote her mother. "I do not wonder," she wrote, "that you always loved your old home. It is delightful around here. I am having a delightful visit. Aunt Mary and Mabel are both very nice. Tommy is a good-hearted, pleasant boy, but he goes to dances every little while and his father doesn't act as though he cared. Uncle David is rather stingy and surly and doesn't seem to enjoy his religion very much. He and Tommy are having a discussion about giving;

Charlie Moncrief and his father are helping. You remember his father and mother,—well, they are helping in the discussion and in the hunt for New Testament verses on giving. I have taken a hand, too.

“You have often told me about the little church in the village of Hillside, where you used to worship, and how much it looked like a good-sized school house. Well, it does not look so any more, for they have enlarged and beautified it and added a belfry and some of a tower. So it is a very pretty church. The inside looks very well too, and they have a nice carpet on the floor. It was laid last Fourth of July. It seems the people purchased a new carpet and the ladies sewed it. Then the question of putting it down was discussed, for it is quite a task to put a big carpet down all over a church. They thought it would take ten or fifteen young people all day to put it down. As that is an especially busy time of year for the farmers they did not want to spare the day from their work. At the suggestion of Charlie Moncrief, the president of the Young People’s Society, they decided to celebrate the Fourth of July by putting down the church carpet.

“They had a picnic dinner and everyone that wanted to went and helped. Mabel was there, but Tommy went over to Redding to a celebration. Mabel says that it cost him ten dollars and he didn’t get home until four o’clock the next morning. I am rather inclined to think the first, although an unusual way of celebrating, is a much better way.”

CHAPTER XI.

STEWARDSHIP.

“THE snow is going off fast,” said Mr. Jenkins, as they were comfortably seated in Mr. Moncrief’s large old kitchen for their last evening’s study of the subject of giving.

“Yes,” answered Mr. Moncrief, “there are some great bare spots in the road now. It will be bad travelling very soon.”

“You are talking of leaving us soon, are you, Laura?” asked Mrs. Moncrief.

“Yes,” answered Laura, “I think I shall go home in a few days. I have been here five weeks and I did not expect to stay over three when I came. But the hills are so beautiful and I have had such a nice time that I do not want to leave.”

“If you think the hills are beautiful in the winter, you ought to see them in the summer,” said Mrs. Moncrief. “You better stay a little longer. You don’t come this way very often.”

“No,” said Laura, “I never was here before and I may never be here again.”

“I hope you will,” said Charlie quietly.

Something in his tone made Laura look at him and then turn her head to hide her changing color.

“Well, Charlie,” said Tommy, abruptly, “are you loaded and primed ready to fire at us on the subject of stewardship?”

“I could give you a few ideas on it,” said Charlie, “but I talked too much the other night down to your house. I think father better explain this to us.”

"I do not," said Mr. Moncrief. "I have not been giving it the special study lately that you have. I will help some, but I think you better go ahead."

"What is the meaning of the word steward?" asked Charlie.

"I don't know," answered Tommy. "I never looked it up."

"Webster defines steward thus: 'A man employed in a large family or on a large estate to manage the domestic concerns, superintend other servants, collect the rents or income, keep accounts and the like. (2) On board ship one who has the charge of distributing food and drink or of waiting on the officers and passengers. (3) A fiscal agent of certain bodies.' There are other definitions, but these are sufficient, I should judge," said Charlie.

"From these definitions it is plain that a steward is one that is entrusted with another man's property, and a good steward is one that is faithful to his trust."

"I see what 'good steward' means," said Tommy, "but I don't see as it applies to us at all, for we are nobody's stewards. We own our own farms and manage them to suit ourselves."

"Yes," said Mr. Moncrief, "most people do manage their finances to suit themselves, for most people are tempted to say, like some of the people of old that the Bible tells about: 'My power and the might of mine arm hath gotten me this wealth.'

"Waal, hasn't it?" asked Mr. Jenkins. "Nobody gave me my farm and stock. I got it all myself. I worked hard and earned it."

"Let me quote the rest of the verse," said Mr. Moncrief. "'But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.' He has given us the strength and the brains to cultivate the land aright. These things are just entrusted to us. We are stewards. A steward is supposed to have a salary, or

what he needs for his own personal expenses. If he keeps increasing his personal expenses and indulges in all sorts of luxuries for himself and family, and only sends to his distant master a little pittance, seeming to think all the goods he handles are now his own, what would you think of such a steward?"

"I would say he was decidedly unfaithful and was a miserable scoundrel," said Mr. Jenkins, excitedly. "If he treated me that way I would lodge him in jail pretty quick and he never would manage anything for me again."

"There are thousands of Christians who are treating their Lord just that way," said Mr. Moncrief. "Many of the farmers think the land is their own, just as though they had made it. If they give five dollars to help support the minister, ten cents to foreign missions, ten cents for home missions and a copper for Sunday-school, some old cast-off clothes to the poor occasionally, that the Lord ought to be very grateful to them for their generosity and bless them abundantly in this world and in the next. But instead of that I am afraid He will say to them in thunder tones: 'Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. Ye say wherein have we robbed thee'? He shall say in tithes and offerings."

"But," said Mr. Jenkins, "does the Bible say we are stewards? Does it say that the earth is the Lord's, for I never heard that before?"

"We find," Charlie answered, "that God is the creator and upholder of the earth, also the judge and ruler, and he nowhere says he has resigned the charge of the earth to men. David says, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.' And again, at the dedication of the building material for the Temple he said: 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine.

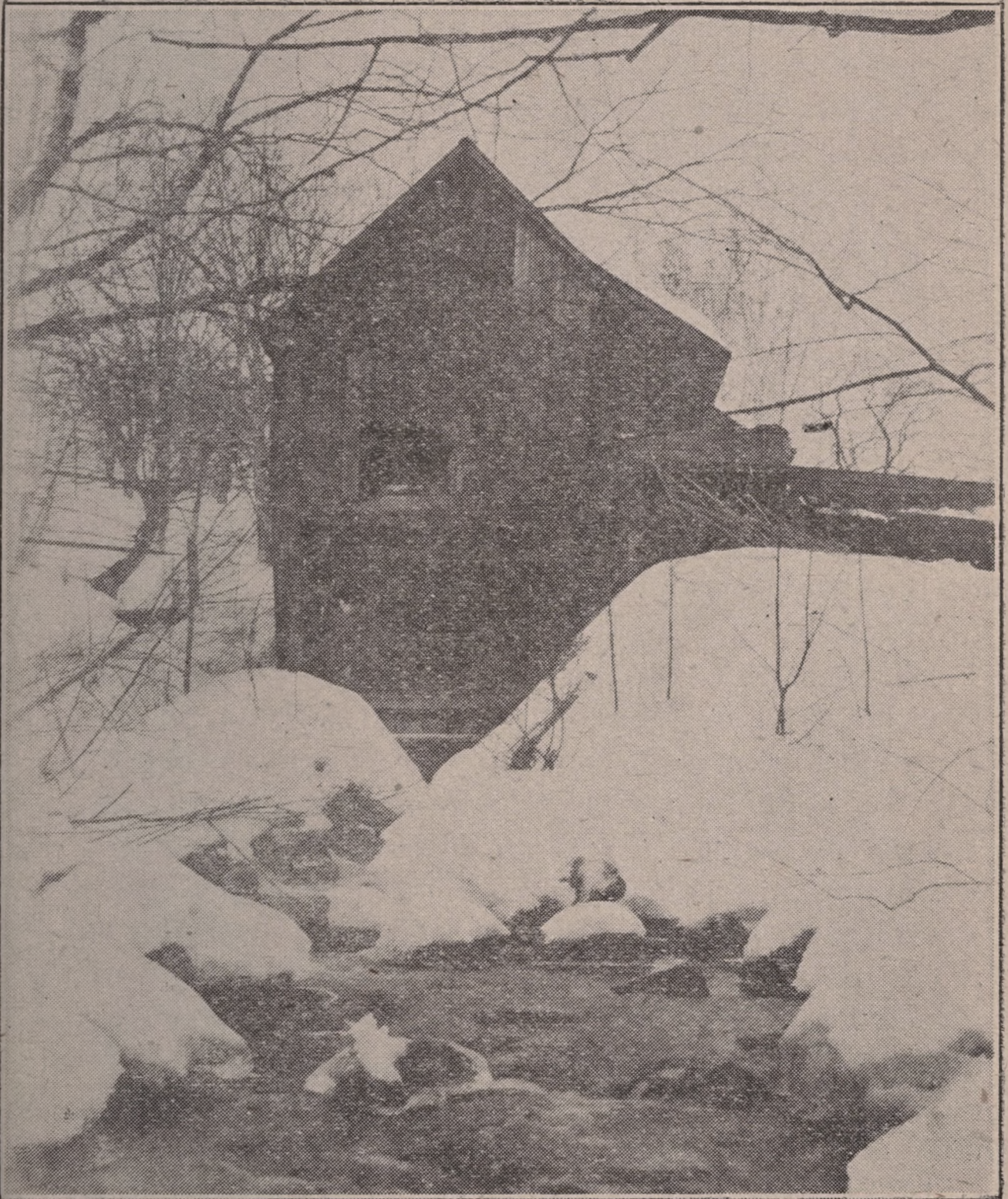
Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee and thou reignest over all and in thine hand is power and might and in thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all.' So it seems very plain that the Lord owned the land after he had made it, that the Lord never has given a deed of it to men, but has only loaned it or rented it to them and that the men on the land are stewards and not absolute owners."

"But are we told anything about this stewardship in the New Testament?" asked Mr. Jenkins, sharply.

"O yes," said Charlie, we find a good deal about it. I will give you a little. Paul shows that only God's blessing can make human effort effective in any line, for he says: 'I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.' The New Testament, you see, emphasizes the fact that God is owner and giver of all things, whether physical or spiritual, but with especial emphasis laid on the spiritual. Paul says, 'The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.' We are God's and all that we have is God's. These temporal and spiritual gifts and blessings are ours to use wisely and give account of faithfully and minutely. A minister is a steward: 'For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God.' I suppose that means being in charge of Christ's church and not accounting it his own. But this stewardship extends to all Christians. It doesn't stop with the pastors, for all Christians are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ. Peter says, 'As every man hath received the gift, so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.'

"We all have some gifts from God, such as life and strength. How true the words: 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive?' So all that we have is a gift. Paul says: 'God giveth us richly all things to enjoy.'"

"But this passage in First Peter that we have just quoted refers to temporal things as well as spiritual for the



TAIL RACE OF SAW MILL.

ninth verse says: 'Use hospitality one to another without grudging.' So the Christian holds all things that he has as subject to the command of God, for he is only entrusted with it, and we are told by Christ himself in Matt. 10:8: 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' Then, also in Christ's parable of the talents and the pounds we see the blessings conferred on those who improved or used what God had entrusted to them, and the fate of the man who did not use what was entrusted to him.

"Now after listening to all these passages let me read you a few words from a pamphlet by Rev. G. A. Forneret. He says: 'When the Christian has learned and adopted for himself the great principle that God is owner and giver of all things, and its complementary principle that he is God's steward or agent in the administration of all his gifts, then he will begin to realize the steward's responsibilities, duties and privileges. His property is not now absolutely his own, but only relatively and conditionally his.

"It is indeed to be used largely in the proper support of and provision for himself and those dependent upon him, for: 'If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel,' I Tim. 5:8; but God's portion for objects unselfish and not personal—for church and charity—will be as large and as definite as possible. Furthermore true Christian stewardship does not end with simply detaching a generous percentage of income for religious and philanthropic purposes and then calmly assuming absolute ownership over the remainder. The stewardship does certainly impose the reserving of an adequate portion exclusively for God's work, but it also demands the duty of intelligently distributing that portion and the further duty of administering as in the sight of God what is left. One duty of stewardship well performed can never buy exemption from its other

duties. The true Christian quietly, but cheerfully, takes up his stewardship and with God's help does his best to learn and to discharge all its functions, 'because it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful,' and he remembers that the end of life's little day will soon draw near when the Master shall say to him, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest no longer be steward!' "

"Waal, waal," said Mr. Jenkins, as Charlie finished reading, "the Bible does seem to take pretty strong ground on the subject an' no mistake. I never knew those passages were in there before, but then," continued Mr. Jenkins, "I allers give to all the collections that are taken for missionary objects and everything else unless I happen to forget my pocketbook, as I do sometimes, but I don't give much for Missions, for I don't believe much in Foreign Missions."

"Christ did," said Mr. Moncrief quietly.

"That's a fact," said Mr. Jenkins, slowly, for if he hadn't believed in it, He never would have come to earth."

"And He told us to be, and if we fully realize what Christ has done for us we shall want others to know what Christ has done for them, if they will let Him. To the Christian there are many commands in the New Testament that we should obey, but there is one that is very essential: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy might, mind and strength and thy neighbor as thyself!'"

"Whew!" ejaculated Mr. Jenkins, "does it say so in in the Bible."

"Yes, plainly, in so many words," said Mr. Moncrief, "God first and your neighbor as yourself, not more, or less, but as yourself."

"Waal, waal, and I didn't know it said that. I guess

"I better go to studying my Bible," continued Mr. Jenkins, as though he were talking to himself.

"I think it would be a good plan," said Mr. Moncrief, kindly, for the Bible says: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me.'"

"I believe that," said Mr. Jenkins, "and I used to read the Bible considerable when I was first converted, but I haint read it much lately, in fact I don't know when I have read a whole chapter in the Bible."

"Why," said Mr. Moncrief, "don't you read it at family worship?"

"I used to," said Mr. Jenkins, "but I haven't had family worship for many years."

"Is that so?" said Mr. Moncrief, you don't know what a blessing you have missed."

"No," said Mr. Jenkins, sadly, "I don't know as Tommy ever heard me pray in my home, or saw me read the Bible either."

"I can remember" said Tommy, "when I was a very little boy that you used to read in the Bible and kneel down and pray, and I have often wondered why you didn't do the same now."

"I think you had better take up family worship again, my brother," said Mr. Moncrief, gently.

"I think I ought to live a better Christian," said Mr. Jenkins, earnestly; "I know my wife would like to have me establish family prayer again and I believe I will," he said with decision.

"Thank God," said Mr. Moncrief, almost to himself, and then he continued, addressing Mr. Jenkins: "May the Lord bless you in doing your duty there. But now let us look again at what we have been talking about this evening as well as a number of other evenings. I think you will acknowledge that the Bible does teach a great deal about giving. It is our duty to give, our priv

illegible to give, and that we are responsible to God, how, and how much we give, and while I do not believe that a tenth is the maximum that a Christian should give, and we do not have a hard and fast rule that we must do that, yet it is a good rule to work to until you can go beyond it."

"Waal, I don't think it would make much difference in my giving," said Mr. Jenkins, "for I think I give pretty near a tenth now."

"Do you keep any account of what you do give?" asked Mr. Moncrief.

"No," said Mr. Jenkins, "I don't; I don't think it is worth while. I give to most everything that comes along and I guess I give about a tenth."

"Do you have a separate place or separate purse for the Lord's portion?" asked Mr. Moncrief.

"No, I don't, do you?" asked Mr. Jenkins.

"Yes, I do," said Mr. Moncrief, earnestly, "and we have had for many years and no inducement could make me go back to the slipshod method of not knowing how much we rendered to the Lord.

"Now, continued Mr. Moncrief, "you better try laying aside one-tenth of all your income and putting it in a separate place and using that for the Lord's work."

"Oh, I don't know; it's too much bother," said Mr. Jenkins.

"Not if the Lord and Master wants you to," said Mr. Moncrief earnestly.

"Father, didn't you say," interposed Tommy, "that you would live up to the verses in the New Testament?"

Mr. Jenkins twisted in his chair rather uneasily and glancing at the clock looked as though he was on the point of saying: "its time to go home." Tommy was determined his father should not get off as easily as that, so he persisted:

"You might as well own up, Father, that you did say you would live up to the New Testament and so you better begin and practice the stewardship that we have been hearing about, for if that is true, and we cannot deny it, I don't believe you have been a very faithful steward."

"Yes," said Mr. Moncrief, "try it for a year if you cannot decide it for life."

"Waal, I will," said Mr. Jenkins, decidedly, "although I reckon it won't make much difference with my givin'."

"It will be easy for you," said Mr. Moncrief, for you own your farm and you will not have to exempt any of your income for interest on borrowed capital."

"Oh, yes, I own my farm, but there are the taxes that have to be paid every year and then I must also take out money to run the house, before I give the Lord the tenth."

"Musn't I?" said Mr. Jenkins earnestly.

"Certainly not," said Tommy, Charlie and Mr. Moncrief all in a breath. After the laugh which followed this outbreak had subsided, Mr. Moncrief said:

"Our minister gets four hundred dollars a year which doesn't much more than provide the necessities of life for himself and family. Perhaps at the end of the year he puts ten dollars in the bank. Reasoning the way you have just been talking, he would give one tenth of that ten dollars, or one dollar, where now he gives over forty a year."

"Waal, I think he gives too much," said Mr. Jenkins quickly.

"Well," said Mr. Moncrief, "I am not the judge of that; he believes in doing that way, and he believes he gets along better with God's blessing and the nine-tenths than if he selfishly should use the ten-tenths, but I only used that as an illustration to show that if you began to reserve a part that shouldn't be tithed, then others

could also do the same and not give much of anything. No, your income should all be tithed, pension, and all."

"My income," said Mr. Jenkins, "doesn't come in so much every month. If it did, it would be easy enough, but mine comes in by dribblets, and then a bunch perhaps. Now, how shall I get at it?"

"There are two ways," said Mr. Moncrief.

"You could keep account of everything that comes in and also of how much you pay out for the Lord's work and at the end of the year balance the account." Then there is another way which I think is really a better plan and that is to lay aside in a separate place ten cents out of every dollar that comes in; then you will have a fund for all of the departments of the Lord's work and your fund will rarely be exhausted, as you use that money wisely in the Lord's work, praying for guidance to use the Lord's money the best way, for His glory."

"But our groceries are bought, many of them, with butter and eggs. How do you mark that?"

"Easily enough," said Mr. Moncrief. "Just let your wife give every tenth pound of butter and every tenth egg to the minister, if he has no cow or doesn't keep hens. If he does keep hens and has a cow, she can sell the butter and eggs and then lay by the tenth of the price of each, and then she will have something to give to the Lord's causes as they are seen by her. Oh, it is easy enough if any ones wishes, the main thing is to want to do it."

"Waal," said Mr. Jenkins, "if I get considerable of the Lord's money, I suppose I could use that to pay for Mabel's music lessons, or to send Tommy to school couldn't I?"

"Would a faithful steward do that?" said Mr. Moncrief gently, "wouldn't he be supposed to educate his own children out of his nine-tenths?"

"I guess you are right," said Mr. Jenkins slowly. "But supposing a man didn't own much of anything, or

only owned a part of his farm, so was deeply in debt, and was struggling to extricate himself, how should he do then?"

"As I look at it," said Mr. Moncrief; "the debt to God, of a part of our income, is the first debt, and we must pay our first debt first, and then God can wonderfully bless us in paying our debts, but if we ignore His claims, we shall have up-hill work paying our other debts, for the Bible plainly says: 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you,' and I believe it implicitly. The reason why so many men have such a hard time financially is because they ignore God and no man can do it and prosper right along. God is very merciful and very patient with people, and He does bless them, more than one man would another, if we treated men the way we treat God."

"Waal, I said I would try laying aside a tenth and I will for one year, but I won't promise for more than one year, and now I think it is time for us to be going home," said Mr. Jenkins.

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Moncrief, "let us thank the Lord for the two resolutions that have been made here to-night and let us ask the Lord to give you strength and grace to live up to them."

They all knelt in prayer, while Mr. Moncrief reverently and feelingly thanked the Great Father for all of His blessings, and for the way Mr. Jenkins had been guided in his investigation of the word of truth, and implored divine strength for him, to enable him to live up to his new resolutions.

Mr. Jenkins uttered a fervent amen at the conclusion of the petition.

CHAPTER XII

SUGARING OFF.

"It is not very late," said Charlie, "and as this may be our last evening together for some time, we thought you would remain a little while longer and give Laura a taste of a genuine New England sugaring-off."

"Oh, well, I don't mind," said Mr. Jenkins, "but how long will it take?"

"Only a short time," said Mrs. Moncrief, "for we planned this, and so we have had the syrup in a kettle on the stove simmering away all the evening, and now if we pour it out into a sap pan it will not take long to have it ready to sugar off."

Soon the syrup was bubbling and foaming in the pan on the stove, while it was carefully watched, stirred and skimmed. Charlie had slipped out of the room when the mixture began to boil and now returned with two big milk pans full of snow, upon which, when it was thick enough, they proceeded to spread some of the boiling syrup and then when it was cool they ate it. It was delicious, a kind of maple candy. Laura had never eaten anything like it and she appreciated it very much.

After every one had eaten all they wished of this wax or candy and the pieces on the snow being brittle, this signifying that the boiling mass was ready to sugar off, a board was placed on the table, the pan was hoisted from the stove and deposited on the board. Then the mass was stirred until it stopped boiling, when two or three people began to dip out the hot liquid sugar into fancy little tins that had just been taken out of cold water.

After the tins were all filled the balance was stirred and allowed to make dry sugar. In a few minutes the sugar in the tins becoming solid and partly cool they were taken from the tins and laid on the table to further cool off.

"My," said Laura, "what beautiful sugar. I never saw any as white as this is; I have seen some sugar out in Illinois, but that was so much darker than this. What is the reason for that?"

"This is pretty near the first run, you know, and that is always whiter than it is afterward," said Charlie, and then with our tin buckets and galvanized iron spiles and tin pans everything is a great deal cleaner than it used to be fifty years ago and so it is nicer and whiter."

"Well, I have had a sweet time," said Mr. Jenkins, "and I guess we better be going now."

"All right," said Mr. Moncrief heartily, "I will not detain you any longer, but I am glad you came and glad you stopped to give Laura a sight that she won't forget right away."

"I am glad I came too," said Mr. Jenkins, as he started out for his team.

As they were stowing themselves into the double sleigh Mrs. Moncrief appeared at the door with a good-sized parcel in her hands. "I will ask Laura to take this parcel with her out west to make sure she does not forget this evening right away."

"Oh, thank you," said Laura warmly, "but I don't think I shall ever forget this visit," and she glanced at Charlie.

"Well good night all," sang out the hearty voice of Mr. Jenkins after they were all nicely tucked in, and amidst goodnights and goodbyes on both sides the spirited horses sped away.

"Well, thank God!" said Mr. Moncrief, after he had had entered the house, "this evening's resolutions will

mean a great deal in that home; no one will know him in a year from now as the Mr. Jenkins we have known if he is faithful to the two pledges made here tonight, and I believe and trust he will be."

"I trust so, too," said Charlie, "for it will mean a great deal for Tommy. I am praying that the Lord may open his eyes and bring him to Christ and I believe He will yet."

CHAPTER XIII.

A YEAR AFTER.

TWELVE months had rolled around bringing few changes to the people around Hillside. Time seemed to touch our friends of the preceding chapters gently, so that they seemed to be growing young instead of old and seemed to be happier as the days went by.

Every one had noticed some subtle, quiet change in Mr. Jenkins but none the less remarkable because quiet. He and his family were at church every Sunday, not only in the morning but also in the evening. Then the mid-week prayer-meeting always finds him there ready to speak or pray in a way that helps people. Covenant meeting also has his presence regularly.

Then he has doubled his subscription to the pastor's salary a number of times and he likewise gives a generous amount to every missionary object.

Charlie Moncrief wrote a letter about this time to Laura in which he told so many things about Mr. Jenkins that we take the liberty of quoting it.

"I have told you in my occasional letters some things about Mr. Jenkins and the changes that every one has noticed in him. I wish you could have been here and heard him last Saturday at the covenant meeting. He came in with a smiling, happy face, and Tommy, Mabel and Mrs. Jenkins with him, and I never saw

Tommy in a covenant meeting before and I was astonished. There was a good large company at the meeting that day, a few more than usual. We had very good, earnest singing, many fervent prayers and very excellent testimonies. Mr. Jenkins seemed to be feeling deeply, for every once in a while a tear would steal down his cheek, but his face was shining. He waited until most of the others had taken part and then he rose to his feet; the first thing he said was: 'Praise God!' Then he couldn't say any more for a minute; then, 'Thank the Lord!' he ejaculated; 'He has been so good to me all my life. He has wonderfully blessed me, and now I feel as though my cup runneth over. 'Friends,' and here he paused to wipe his eyes and blow his nose: 'I guess we have got time and so I want to tell you something. Some of you know some of it but I guess no one knows it all, so I will tell it.

'As I look back one year I can hardly believe I am the same man. Well I am the same man an' yet I'm not, praise the Lord! A year ago I was controlled by self; now, I trust, I am controlled by Christ. You remember the sermon that our pastor, there, preached a year ago last Sunday with its solemn question: "Will a man rob God?" I was purty well stirred up that day an' almost angry with the minister. Then the Lord used my boy to keep me stirred up until I learned some of the teachings of that blessed Word of God on the subject of giving. I finally, after a hard struggle, promised I would try tithing and family worship for a year. The family worship was hard at first, but finally became a great blessing to me and I think to my whole family.

'But tithing! my, that was hard, and I had no idea it would be, but how my old natur' did squirm, for I didn't realize until then how much I loved my money.' (You see, Laura, I am giving you some of his own words and phrases so that you may get the full force of them.)

“The first money that I got after I had agreed to give, or pay the Lord a tenth, was ten dollars for some cord wood that I had been hauling off over to the railroad station. I took one dollar out of that ten and laid it by. I did it gladly and joyously and I thought how nice and easy it was; there is not much to that. I was proud of my own goodness, that made it so easy for me to do that. The next day after that I sold my apples. They were so cheap in the fall that I didn't sell them and I was beginning to get anxious about them, it was so near spring, but apples had been going up all winter, so I had been in no hurry to sell mine before, but I sold them then for \$2.25 a barrel for first quality and a dollar a barrel for second quality, and I had a hundred barrels of first quality and twenty-five of second, that made \$250. I had planned to buy some steers with a part of the money and put the rest of it in the bank, but the first thing I was met with the thought I must give twenty-five dollars to the Lord. I first thought I couldn't do it and I wouldn't do it. Why said I to myself, what shall I do with that much money. That is more than I have ever given to the Lord in a whole year before. My wife made some remark about a good steward; then it all came back to me with great force, an' I sat down and counted out twenty-five dollars an' laid it away. But, oh, how my natur' did squirm. I didn't want to give that to the Lord; I coveted it; I almost worshipped it it seems to me now. For a number of days I thought about it so much, and wanted to go an' take the money back so much, that I thought that I had better get rid of it lively, so I put five dollars into the basket for the minister the next Sunday morning and it was the time for the foreign mission that day an' I put in five dollars where I had usually put in five cents, or at the most ten cents. Actually, I began to enjoy putting the money to its uses. The wrench was in laying it by in the first place. There didn't much more money come in,

excepting in little bits, for some time. I won't dwell on it in all its particulars, for it would weary you. It is too long a story. I have a little pension of eight dollars a month and I draw it at one time. That made ten dollars more for the Lord. I squirmed a little more, but not so much as at the first. It kept growing easier and easier, until lately I have positively enjoyed laying away the tenth, and lately I have been adding quite a little to the Lord's tenth for an offering to God for His wonderful goodness to me the past year and His marvelous patience with me when I was an unjust steward, continually robbing God.

I can say that I now positively enjoy seeing the contribution box coming toward me, but I didn't use to enjoy it. Now there is always something in the Lord's treasury for the Lord's work.

This has been a marvelous year for me, temporally and spiritually. I never have been so blessed in my life. I recommend this way to everyone, with large income or small, as a standard to work to. Not that I believe a tenth is nearly enough to pay the Lord, but it is a good thing to have a standard, especially to begin with. I intend to keep right on laying aside a tenth to pay to the Lord, and besides the tenth I intend to do a good deal of giving, for I have come 'round to the belief that I don't begin to give until after I have rendered one tenth to the Lord.

I intend to be a good steward. I have learned that the Lord takes care of the income and it isn't for me to worry or fret about crops, but simply to do the work well and use the income wisely that the Lord commits to me. In the years of my stingy Christianity—if a stingy man can be a Christian, which I somewhat doubt—I never seemed to be very anxious for the conversion of my children. I thought more of saving a dollar than I did of saving a soul and so Tommy here had no respect

for my religion if I had any. But I have been very anxious for my children lately. I have been praying a great deal for them and I have said a few words to them so that now they have both given their hearts to the Lord and wish to unite with the church. I praise God for his goodness. I thank Him that He ever inspired our pastor to preach from that solemn question, 'Will a man rob God?' and that he ever used it to stir me up and lead me to undertake this blessed way of living. I wouldn't go back to the old niggardly, slipshod way of living and giving for all I am worth in this world.'

"Then he sat down and wiped his eyes and most everyone was smiling and crying together. Then Mr. Powell started the song, 'All hail the power of Jesus' name.' Every one joined in with a will and how the music did roll out. A great sense of God's goodness and power filled their souls as they realized that here were some more trophies of God's grace and power.

"As soon as the song ceased Tommy Jenkins was on his feet and with wet eyes and a shining face, he said:

'I too, want to praise God to-day. This is the first time I have ever praised Him in public. I yielded myself to Him unreservedly last night and I know He has forgiven my sins and accepted me for Christ's sake; and I thank Him and I intend by His help to live for Him fully. I intend to obey Him in all things. To that end I wish to unite with His people. Perhaps I had better tell you a little of my experience. You all know me, as I was born up here on the farm and have lived there ever since. You know my life and you know how I used to rather go to a dance than to church and I had rather play cards than study my Sunday school lesson. I used to attend church considerable of the time and Sunday school a part of the time, but I didn't believe in religion, or not in some people's religion. I wasn't very old when I discovered there were grades in religion, or different kinds,

or something. I believed in my mother's religion, but I didn't believe in my father's for I didn't believe he had any, any more than I had, and I knew I didn't have any. I thought I would stand just as good a show before God as he did, but I think I misjudged him, for I think he was a Christian, but not such a one as he is now. Most of you are somewhat familiar with our talks and discussions of a year ago on the subject of giving. I mostly begun those talks to see whether father did care for the Bible or not and whether he would live up to the teachings of the Bible. I used to wonder why father never had family prayer nor ever spoke to me on the subject of religion. If religion was all he proclaimed it to be, it seemed as though he didn't care if I went to the bad and I was going just as fast as the evil one and I could take me. But this last year things have been decidedly different, with family worship, a blessing at every meal, kindness instead of harshness, liberality toward the Lord's work instead of stinginess; five dollars for a benevolence where five cents used to do. I tell you that took hold of me and I also found father was a great deal happier than I had ever seen him before. I made up my mind there was something in religion after all, for a power that could so transform father must be a mighty power. I saw I was a sinner and Christ was a mighty Saviour, able and willing to save me completely if I would let Him. I confessed my sins and He has washed them away and now, by His grace, I want to live fully for Him. Pray for me.'

"Then he sat down and we all sang heartily, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'"

"Mabel Jenkins then told her experience. It seems she has been a Christian for some time. Thanks to her mother's influence. They will be baptized soon in the little lake amongst the hills—the same place where I was baptized, and you remember we slid on to the edge of the lake that day you were with us when I began to tap trees a little over a year ago.

"I tell you, Laura that was a great day, that Covenant meeting day. I was so glad and thankful, for you know Tommy is one of my great friends, and he is a smart fellow, how could he help it, being your cousin? This is no little matter with Tommy for there is no half way business with him. I believe he is going to serve the Lord just as heartily and earnestly as he served the evil one, and so he will be a power for good, for he has been the leader in all kinds of amusements, that, to say the least about them, do not tend to lead any one to Christ. I have written a great deal longer letter than I intended, but this is of such interest that I felt as though I must write you all about it, not but what I expected you would hear about it from your cousins, but they might not go into the details as I have. I wish you were here to enjoy another sugaring-off. I hope you will be sometime."

CHAPTER XIV.

MISS PETERS' CONFESSION.

MISS Caroline Peters had been busy during this eventful year, coming and going amongst the families of the community, as they needed her services. Busy was she in fashioning, shaping and changing all sorts of garments and her tongue was also busy.

One day when she was at home, after the spring rush of work, she stepped in next door to have a little chat with Mrs. Jones, who greeted her cordially, saying: "I am very glad you came in; I have not seen you, only at church, for a long time. How are you, and how is the world using you?"

"Oh, nicely, nicely," said Miss Peters briskly. "I have had plenty of work and that is a blessing. I have also had strength to work, for which I am thankful. But I have come to tell you something and to make a confes-

sion. You know I used to go up to Mr. Jenkins one day a year, usually; rarely two, and help cut over some old dresses and occasionally help make a new one. I used to be so disgusted with Mr. Jenkins and his stinginess, that, as I have told you many a time, if that was christianity I did not want any of it, but I have always known the truth of the saying that each one was responsible for his own life and actions; as that old colored woman quaintly put it: "Every tub must stand on its own bottom," and I looked at the worst christians instead of the best to find fault with them which I knew all the time was not right in me. Well I was up there for a week last fall sewing new garments and old, and now I have just come from there, or at least I was up there all last week, and I want to tell you the Lord has made a tremendous change in that man and in his home. There was no praying done in that home that I could ever see when I was there, and there was no blessing asked at the table and there were no religious papers of any kind.

"Now they have a blessing asked at every meal, and, think of it! that wild, reckless Tommy takes turns with his father in asking a blessing. Then they have family worship every night and morning in which they take turns; or else they all join, as is often the case, and I was astonished to find a number of religious papers as well as numerous missionary magazines and Mr. Jenkins read them a great deal, and seemed to be greatly interested in the Lord's work all over the world.

"Mr. Jenkins is just as good a farmer as he ever was and I am not sure but what he had even better horses and cattle than he used to have, but he did not mention them but once or twice while I was there all last week, and that used to be his main topic of conversation, and the Lord and His work wasn't talked about at all, unless it was to criticize some church member, or to find fault with

something Mr. Powell had said. I did not hear him criticize any member or the pastor once last week. Instead of that, he was talking of the Lord's work all over the world, in India, China, Africa and also all parts of our own country. He prayed a great deal for the minister and the church here at Hillside, and for our state and nation. I have discovered who made the minister's wife a life member of the Foreign Missionary Society, and also who gave that nice set of books to the minister at Christmas. You remember it said on the card, 'From friends who appreciate the work of our pastor.' They did not intend to let me know of it, I suppose and probably they do not realize that I know it, but I do."

"Last Friday evening I thought I would ask Mr. Jenkins a few questions, that had been puzzling me. He seemed so good natured and happy, I thought he wouldn't mind, so I got ready and said: 'Mr. Jenkins, what makes the difference between you now, and as you used to be?'"

"Why, is there any difference?" he said, as innocent as could be.

"Well I should say so," said I with energy. "You are no more like the Mr. Jenkins that I used to know than I am like your wife."

"Have I changed for the better or the worse," said Mr. Jenkins with a sly twinkle in his eye.

"Changed for the better or worse," I repeated with emphasis. "Don't you know?"

"Well I rather mistrust," said he, "and I think it is for the better, I feel better anyway. But can you see any difference?"

"Well, Mr. Jenkins," said I, "you are no more like what you were a year and a half ago than black is like white. Why, I was so disgusted with you at that time that if you had been the last man in the world and you had offered me all you had in this world, your big farm and all, I would not have been your wife. But now!

Well I think your wife must enjoy life.' Mrs. Jones, you ought to have seen him laugh; it would have done you good. Finally, after sometime, he stopped laughing and I said, "what has brought about this change?"

"The Lord," said he solemnly and joyously.

"Yes," said I rather interrogatively, for I wanted him to go and explain.

"Yes, thank the Lord, He did it and I praise Him," said Mr. Jenkins, "but He used Elder Powell and that solemn question, 'Will a man rob God?' first to stir me up and get me almost angry, and then He used Tommy here to keep me stirred up. You have heard, of course, about our Bible studies?"

"Yes, I have," I said. "You remember, don't you Mrs. Jones, that I said at the time of that sermon, that I should think it would make some of the church members squirm; and so it did you see. Well it is wonderful the way God works, sometimes. But there is one other thing about Mr. Jenkins I must tell you. I asked him why he didn't talk about his farm and horses and cattle as he used to do. "Don't you care anything about them now?" said I.

"Sartinly, sartinly," said he. "Well, then, why don't you talk about them now?" "We are told in the Divine word," he answered, " 'Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' we are also told 'Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth;' and again, 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' So you see the first in thought, in talk, in deed, must be given to the Lord and His work, and the farm and stock must take the place that they belong in, namely, the secondary place, and if we elevate them to the first place, we disobey God, and we shall be barren, niggardly Christians—just what I was—but thank the Lord I am

not now. I have so much of the Lord's work to talk about that I do not find time or inclination to talk a great deal about these temporal things."

"I told Mr. Jenkins then, what I came over here to tell you now, and that is this: I said a year ago, that if you were a Christian I did not think I wanted any Christianity, although I knew all the time that that would not excuse me, but now I say that I want the same religion that you and your family have. Mr. Jenkins was glad and he said 'I hope you will find the pure religion of the Lord.'

"That night I yielded my heart to the Lord and now I want to serve Him faithfully, and I am going to try to be a faithful steward in all things. I expect one of my hardest battles will be to bring my tongue into subjection to the will of Christ. I shall have to pray the Psalmist's prayer very often 'Set a watch, O Lord, at the door of my lips, that I sin not against thee.'

"I realize now, as I never did before, that I do sin against God when I talk about His people the way I have done."

"I am so glad," Mrs. Jones answered, "that you have given your heart to the Lord. I have prayed for you a great deal."

"I suppose you will unite with the church soon?" said Mrs. Jones.

"Oh, yes," said Miss Peters, "I believe it the duty and privilege of every Christian to unite with God's people, and I intend to do so very soon. Did you think," continued Miss Peters, "how many there are in the church that are now giving at least a tenth to the Lord."

"No," said Mrs. Jones, "I am sure I don't know how many there are. I know that we have begun just lately to lay by a tenth, and we enjoy it."

"Well I didn't know you had begun it. I am glad. I knew I had just begun it, and I am not a member of the

church yet. But there are quite a number besides us. Mr. Kilpatrick and family over north have recently begun; then over on the big hill Mr. Defane and Lamb's people have begun it since Mr. Jenkins' testimony in covenant meeting, for they told me so. Then Mr. Jenkins' whole family, and you know that Tommy and Mabel each have some wages; then Mr. Moncrief's family and Elder Powell's family have practiced it for some years I guess. I know Mr. Moncrief's family have practiced it since before Charlie was born and that must be about twenty years. Yes, I remember Charlie comes of age next December."

"Oh, by the way, speaking about Charlie, reminds me of Laura. You remember her? Well the indications are, that she may come back here some time to live, and perhaps before long, for she and Charlie have corresponded regularly since she went back to Illinois, and something was said the last time I was there, that makes me think Charlie contemplates a trip out west before long. Well, Laura is a fine girl, an active Christian and will be a great help in our church. There has been a great work of God around here in the last year and a half' continued Miss Peters. 'What changes have taken place and one of the most wonderful is that I have found the Lord, after living so many years in sin."

"Truly, what hath God wrought."

"Yes," said Mrs. Jones, "how wonderful it is. Truly, 'God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.'"

THE END.

202
HK224-78





JUN 73

N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0002227191A

